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John O'Sullivan on Bush in Europe

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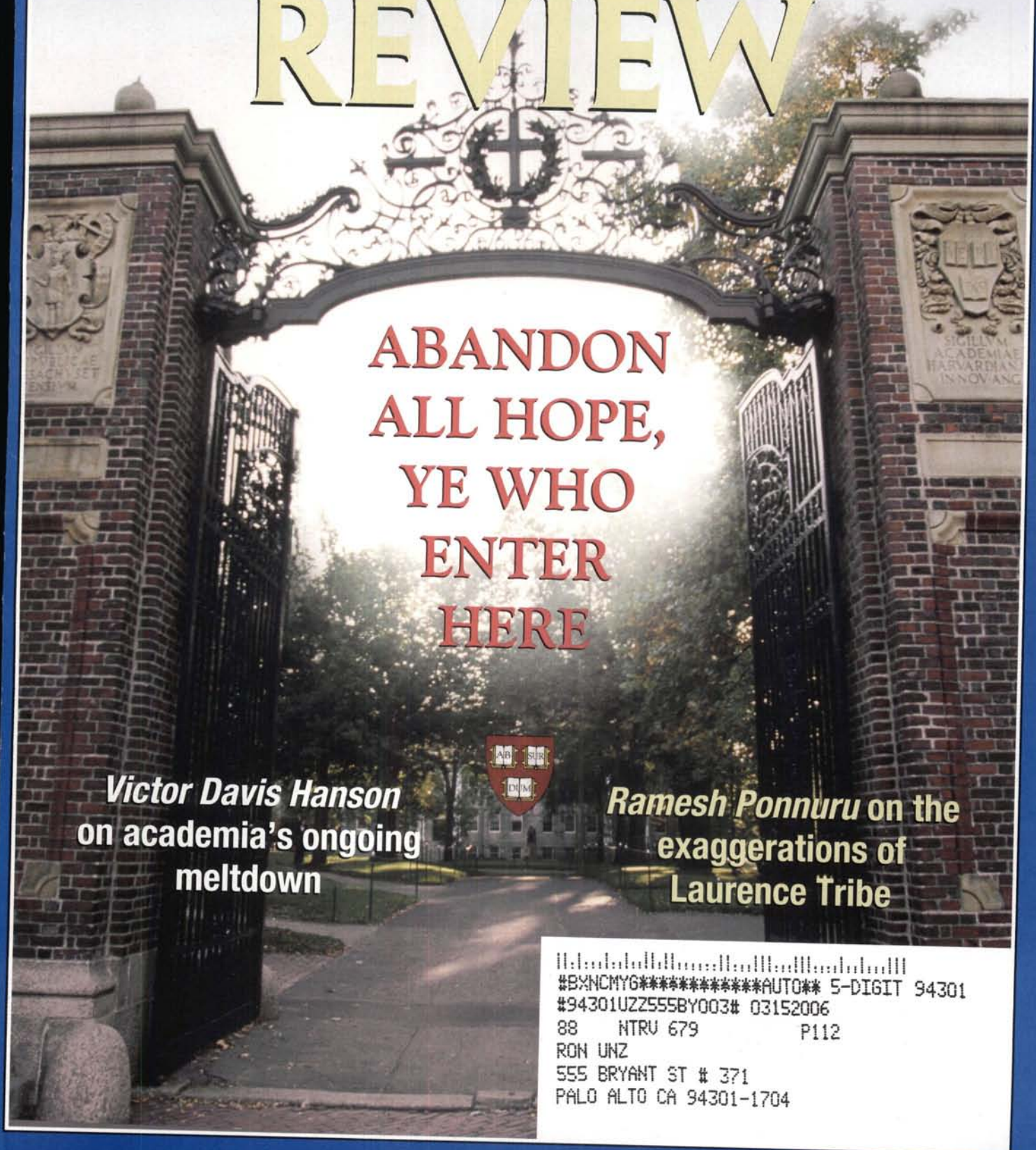

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Victor Davis Hanson on academia's ongoing meltdown

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MARCH 14, 2005 VOL. LVII, NO. 4

NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ COVER STORY

'Teachable Moments'

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Glimpse into the strange world of the contemporary postmodern university of tenured ideologues, where professed identity politics, ethnic or gender chauvinism, and a disbelief in empiricism allow a con man to bully his way to guaranteed lifetime employment, and a handsome salary, and the right to say anything at all, no matter how inflammatory. Well, *almost* anything at all . . . *By Victor Davis Hanson*

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letters to the editor

GOT I.D.?

Since *Darwin's Black Box* was published in 1996, many commentators have thoughtfully critiqued intelligent design. Not so John Derbyshire, whose recent article "But Is It Science?" (Feb. 14) is one long sneer. Aside from his claim that I.D. is hopelessly retro, Derbyshire's main complaint is that "I.D.-ers have been reluctant to submit their theories to peer review." Yet William Dembski's 1998 monograph *The Design Inference* was published by Cambridge University Press after thorough peer review. Several university presses were also interested in publishing my book, but I went with the Free Press, a trade publisher known for academic-quality books that challenge mainstream thinking. Before publication the Free Press sent my manuscript to be read by five scientists, none of whom questioned any of the scientific facts I cited to support the design argument and only one of whom recommended against publication.

Darwin's Black Box received more peer review than any of the several dozen papers I've published in technical journals. I've also responded to criticisms of intelligent design in peer-reviewed articles in philosophy-of-science journals. I had submitted the same articles to science journals but, like Mr. Derbyshire, they refused on principle to consider intelligent design.

Derbyshire quotes Kenneth Miller of Brown University, who wonders why I haven't presented my ideas to a meeting of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, as if I were afraid to do so. That's pretty disingenuous. Years ago Ken Miller and I wrote a joint letter to the ASBMB proposing a symposium on the topic of Darwinism/I.D. at one of their meetings. Besides an acknowledgment of the letter, we never received a response. I've presented seminars on intelligent design in front of any group that has invited me, including many university science departments.

The biochemistry upon which I.D. is based—none of it done by me—is solid. It is the logical structure of the design argument that raises truly intriguing questions, and the extra-scientific implications of the argument that raise hackles. For example, Mr. Derbyshire seems wedded to a conception of the Judeo-Christian God who is "remote from our comprehension"; he mistakenly thinks I.D. implies a "science-fiction God." But I.D. does nothing of the sort. At most I.D. is consistent with a God whose intelligent designs leave traces in the universe. It implies nothing about how remote or incomprehensible such a God may be.

Michael J. Behe
Lehigh University
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MILITARY OPTIONS

One of your news items in "The Week," Feb. 28, noted the military development of a microwave (actually a millimeter-wave) weapon designed to produce a burning sensation on the skin. The discussion seemed to portray this development as leading to a kinder and gentler military. There is such a system in development, but it is not seen as a substitute for lethal force. Rather, it fills a gap between police batons and bullets for a U.S. military that has been forced to control crowds. The issue is not trivial. During the first days of the occupation of Iraq, for example, U.S. forces fired on a crowd in Fallujah, killing or wounding nearly a hundred civilians, when troops guarding a school felt threatened. The question is not whether the shootings were justified. The question, rather, is whether this was the best response and whether different capabilities, like this millimeter-wave system, might have allowed U.S. forces to act differently and thus begin their occupation of that town on a different note.

Mark Cancian
Arlington, Va.

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Victories against Terrorism

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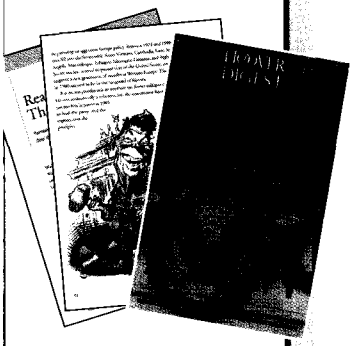

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The scars are too fresh, the mistakes too profound, the human tragedy too deep for anyone to gloat. But with free elections held in Palestinian territory and Iraq, the emergence of Mahmoud Abbas as Palestinian leader, and the whispers of support for democratic reform in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and even plucky little Qatar, one begins to sense that **freedom can prevail over terrorism—even in a difficult part of the world**.

The task ahead is not easy. In the Middle East, for example, the familiar "final status" issues—borders, settlements, Jerusalem, and refugees—will continue to tax the moral courage of statesmen, angering constituents, frustrating allies. Cynical or simplistic voices will sometimes confound those of a more nuanced tone. The trowel and the plastic bomb, both wielded by extremists, may once again clash as instruments of national destiny.

In Iraq, the terrorists retain the ability to kill at random and in considerable numbers. Conflicting factional interests will require painstaking arbitration. Sunnis must join the government, leaving their Baathist or extreme Wahabbi identities at the door.

Still, it is worth noting the similar approach Israel and the United States took in countering terrorist challenges, both acting despite great domestic opposition, little international support, and mounting casualties.

The first imperative was to contain the physical threat. To prevent the suicide bomber pandemic from turning every bus ride, discotheque visit, or dinner out into a Russian-roulette-type experience, Ariel Sharon reoccupied areas on the West Bank and Gaza from which Israel had earlier withdrawn. President Bush courageously endorsed this action as well as Israel's refusal to deal with those "compromised by terror."

The United States was slow to build up its forces in Iraq or to provide the right kind of equipment, problems addressed only in recent months. As important, a coherent plan for training Iraqi forces is now in place.

Second, the operations of both countries exacted a price on populations supporting the terrorists. Israel established checkpoints throughout the most troublesome areas, inhibiting Palestinian commerce, agriculture, and travel. Israeli soldiers arrested thousands of suspects and began building a wall of separation. They reasoned—rightly—that when the burden of supporting terrorism became intolerable, most Palestinians would stop supporting it. From Sadr City in Baghdad to Falluja, to the Sunni "Triangle of Death," the United States began to apply the same lessons. **Resident populations came to understand that the terrorists deliver neither freedom nor pride, only misery.** Intelligence improved dramatically.

Third, Israel, the United States, and Iraqi democrats always held out the promise of better times for those choosing conventional politics over the gun. For Palestinians that promise is mobility, autonomy, and, eventually, statehood. For Iraq's Sunnis it means participation in political life.

Terrorism is, by definition, a political act. When it fails, its stars lose their luster. On Iraq's election day, Mocktada al-Sadr, the once formidable mullah, was figuratively trampled by followers marching past him to the polls. Abu Musab al-Zaqarwi—with his terrorist lieutenants in custody and his name an embarrassment on the Arab street that once cheered him—cursed democracy and its adherents from his hiding place de jour. Nobody seemed to listen.

—Robert Zelnick

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and chairman of the Department of Journalism at Boston University.

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THE WEEK

■ Good news: Jacques Chirac was asked by an American journalist why the French are so spineless. Bad news: It was Jeff Gannon who asked.

■ In other news, we received a letter from a reader (really) who said, "I shouldn't have doubted my daughter." She had told him that her university—Cal State, Chico—didn't have Presidents' Day off, but *did* have Cesar Chavez's birthday off (March 31). He looked up the school calendar on the Internet, and, lo, it was so. To hell with Geo. and Abe. Hail, Cesar!

■ The president appears to have opened the door to a major tax increase. Social Security taxes are currently levied on the first $90,000 of income. If you make more than that, the extra money isn't subject to the Social Security tax. The man who makes $120,000 pays no more in Social Security taxes than the man who makes $90,000. (And since he doesn't pay more, he also doesn't get higher benefits than that man.) The president was asked whether he would support lifting the cap—and thus exposing more income to the tax. He suggested that idea was "on the table." We understand the president's desire to get Democrats to accept Social Security reform. A modest tax increase might even be a price worth paying to get reform, given that personal accounts would function as a conditional tax cut. Personal accounts, that is, would let people keep more of their money so long as they saved it. But raising the cap has the potential to be more than modest. John Kerry wanted to raise tax rates on high earners—but he didn't dare to increase them by 12.4 percentage points. Yet that's what raising the cap would do. (Most proposals to raise the cap would not give people higher benefits in exchange for these higher taxes. The whole point is to extract money from them to feed Social Security.) The new taxes would, moreover, fall disproportionately on Republican voters. What's worse is that since Bush's offer has found no takers among the Democrats, we could be in for more concessions. And the danger signal is already flashing bright.

■ We were skeptical about a directorship of national intelligence, but if you're going to have one, you could do worse than to fill it with John Negroponte. For the past nine months, he has been our man in Baghdad. Before that, he was ambassador to the U.N. He is, as nearly everyone says, "the consummate professional." For almost 40 years, he was in the Foreign Service, and during those decades he held three ambassadorships: to Honduras (under Reagan), to Mexico (under Bush 41), and to the Philippines (under Clinton). He also served with George Shultz at the State Department and with Colin Powell on the National Security Council staff. Everywhere he went, his performance was valued. Yet now he is being smeared as an accomplice to right-wing human-rights abuses in Honduras. The truth is, Central America is one of the great democratic

See page 8

success stories of the last quarter-century. It would be more widely recognized as such if the credit didn't go to Ronald Reagan. That president and his men steered a course between the undemocratic Left and the undemocratic Right—and won. For many years now, all seven Central American countries have been democratic, and that was no sure bet. In fact, you could have bet the opposite. As Secretary Shultz told NR in 2001, "You go to a country [as ambassador] and not everything that happens there is your fault, but you do your best and you work toward democracy, which John did, superbly." We hope he will do as good a job as intelligence czar—as long as we're going to have the position.

■ A majority of the Congress has favored a reform of class-action lawsuits for some time. But it took the November elections, which sent four more Republican senators to Washington, to make it possible to overcome the obstacles that a determined minority of senators in hock to the trial lawyers had erected. Now reform has passed and been signed by the president. The legislation makes it harder for trial lawyers to get state courts to shake down out-of-state corporations. Federal courts will now handle national class-action cases. Joan Claybrook of the Naderite group Public Citizen complains, "Many, many class actions will not be brought" under the new rules. Yes, indeed.

■ Howard Dean—you know him: the former governor of

ROMAN GENN

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THE WEEK...

Vermont who's now chairman of the Democratic National Committee and who recently declared, "I hate the Republicans and everything they stand for"—met with the DNC's "black caucus." He said, "You think the Republican National Committee could get this many people of color in a single room? Only if they had the hotel staff in here." Listening to Dean, and many, many others, you can't help getting the impression that they think of black people, not as people or Americans, but as blacks. The Republican party, blessedly, is different. What did Condoleezza Rice say at the 2000 convention? "I joined the party for different reasons. I found a party that sees me as an individual, not as part of a group. . . . " Beautiful. Besides which—should America have "black caucuses" and other such factions based on pigmentation alone?

■ A New York jury found Lynne Stewart—the radical lawyer accused of helping her terrorist client, "blind sheikh" Omar Abdel Rahman, communicate with his Islamist followers from prison—guilty on all of the counts against her, including conspiring to provide and providing material support to terrorists. Stewart had found a kindred soul in Rahman, both personally and to an extent politically, and she took her trademark activist lawyering a step too far in his post-trial "defense," when she could no longer do much for him legally. In an interesting twist, our own Byron York has reported that George Soros, the major backer of John Kerry's presidential campaign, among other left-wing causes, contributed $20,000 to Stewart's defense committee in 2002. Once again, the republic is the safer for the failure of Soros's causes.

Time for Welfare Reform II

YES, the welfare-reform bill of 1996 was one of the stunning conservative success stories of this generation. It has cut the welfare caseloads in most states by half, while requiring that most beneficiaries of traditional cash-assistance welfare work. And yes, liberals—from Ted Kennedy to the Children's Defense Fund—who claimed that welfare reform would have disastrous effects were dead wrong, in every dire prediction. There is even encouraging evidence that out-of-wedlock teenage births, America's number-one social pathology, have started to decline as teenage girls have gotten the message that having a child is no longer an easy way to a government check.

But the job of welfare reform is not nearly done. Congressman Ernest Istook of Oklahoma has made it his personal mission in life to fix the still-gaping holes in welfare reform that discourage work, marriage, and economic self-sufficiency and instead encourage dependency and cheating. Istook recently compiled some disheartening statistics about welfare spending at the federal level. It's way up when you consider the panoply of means-tested programs. Many members of Congress forget that welfare is not just one federal program but more than 30 separate handouts, including food stamps, Medicaid, child-care subsidies, home-heating assistance, and cash-income supplements. A few years ago, a Cato Institute study calculated the "value" of the whole package of welfare benefits and found that in some states a worker would have to find a job that paid more than $30,000 a year to match it.

Since 2000, welfare payments have skyrocketed. Part of this is a result of the recession, but part is a result of cracks in the welfare laws, which have been exploited by welfare cheats. For example, as Istook points out, although we require work for traditional cash-welfare assistance, there is no work requirement for Medicaid or food stamps in most states, and these are two of the programs with the fastest increases in caseloads since 2000.

Recent reports by the Office of Management and Budget and the General Accounting Office document widespread overpayments of welfare benefits, costing taxpayers $45 billion a year at this point, or over $400 for every American household. OMB recently found that the Medicare program made $21.7 billion in improper payments in 2004. A series of GAO studies found that food stamps are often fraudulently issued to people who are deceased or in prison. GAO estimates that more than 10 percent of food stamps are improperly issued or illegally trafficked. Where are the watchdogs?

For traditional cash-assistance programs, the 1996 welfare-reform bill accomplished three important goals: It required work for benefits; it turned these programs over to the states; and it put five-year federal time limits on financial aid. Welfare Reform Part II should involve the institution of precisely these same commonsense measures for all welfare programs, to permanently break the cycle of poverty and protect against rip-offs of the system. The Left is striving for just the opposite: to reverse the gains from the original welfare reforms and rebuild the corrupt industry of dependency erected in the 1960s and '70s.

Welfare Reform Part II, if properly implemented, will save money and restore the dignity of a purposeful life. It will also be consistent with the original intention of aid to the poor, which was to be a temporary safety net for those out of work and out of luck. In 1935, the founder of the modern welfare state warned, "Continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit." Franklin Roosevelt was right. What a shame that seven decades later Uncle Sam is still undermining the human spirit with this destructive narcotic.

—STEPHEN MOORE

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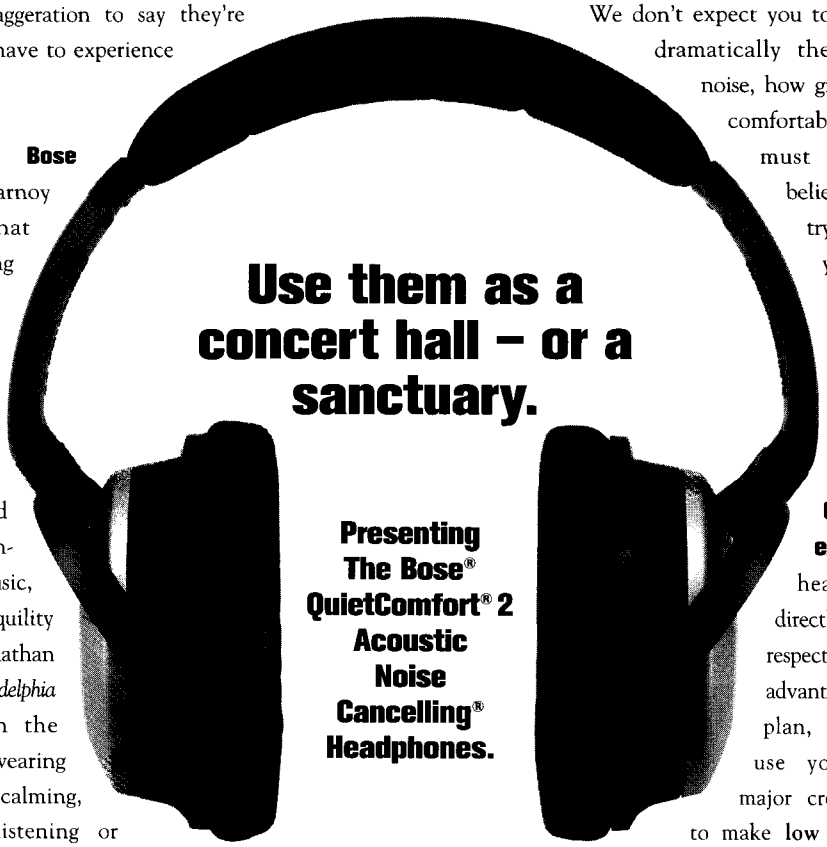

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THE WEEK...

■ The United Nations, of all places, might be an ethical step ahead of us on human cloning. In mid-February, a U.N. panel declared its support for a ban on all forms of human cloning. At around the same time, the president of the Massachusetts state senate introduced legislation, backed by eager Harvard researchers, that would allow the cloning of human embryos for research. Current law requires local district attorneys to sign off on embryo research. The Republican governor, Mitt Romney, is willing to let the law be changed so as to allow research on "surplus" embryos from fertility clinics. But he has pledged to fight any attempt to legalize cloning. His interest in compromise has not been met by a comparable spirit from the biotech enthusiasts. The story we were told in 2001—that research would proceed only on embryos that were "doomed anyway"—has once again been proven false. If Romney and likeminded legislators fail to hold the line at cloning, we can only guess at what new ethical horrors will follow.

■ An attack submarine was named after Jimmy Carter. This $3.2 billion beauty is the last of the Seawolf class, ordered in the final years of the Cold War. We have a hundred things to say, but will confine ourselves to this: May the USS *Jimmy Carter* fight better than the president whose name it bears.

■ Pfc. Rob Jacobs of New Jersey was expecting words of comfort and support when he opened a package of letters from middle-school students in Park Slope, Brooklyn. Instead, the soldier—stationed near North Korea—got a burst of sixth-grade vitriol, as the letter-writers criticized President Bush and the war in Iraq and predicted that few soldiers would return home alive. "I feel that you are being forced to kill innocent people," wrote one student. "Iraq never attacked us, if Bush cared so much about this country then we would be out there trying to find Osama bin Laden." Wrote another: "Bush calls this war the war on terrorism. What terrorism? Name one terrorist from Iraq . . . I know I can't." New York City children are notoriously precocious—*and* left-wing—but they certainly didn't come to such ideas on their own. And while there's nothing wrong with parents' teaching their children a thing or two about politics, it's hardly encouraging to see such young students so indoctrinated in lefty views. They also seem to have been taught that politics comes before consideration and basic human compassion—things Pfc. Jacobs and his fellow soldiers would likely appreciate far more than their sermonizing.

■ On January 25, about seven Iranian political prisoners began a hunger strike to protest their government's abuses, including its crackdown on journalists and political activists, and its incarceration of dissidents with ordinary, often dangerous, criminals. These prisoners are remarkably courageous souls: Arrested for "crimes" like demonstrating for human rights or asking the United Nations to help beleaguered Iranian oppositionists, they endure grim conditions inside prison. Their strike is a plea for international attention and condemnation of Iran's corrupt clerical regime. One hopes it will be heard not only in the United States but around the world, and especially in France and Germany, where economic interests have so far trumped any genuine concern for the political and human rights of the Iranian people.

■ Also in Iran, a group of prominent intellectuals, activists, and student leaders have launched a nationwide call for a referendum on Iran's constitution, which would be an up-or-down vote on the current clerical regime. The idea has generated support across the political spectrum, from far-left groups to moderate monarchists. The proposal may be unrealistic: For a referendum to take place, either some element within the Iranian government would have to support the vote or the regime as a whole would have to be too weak to put up a fight, and neither of those conditions appears to obtain. But Iran tops the list of countries that may be ready for a democratic transition. Its population is highly educated. It is quite young—70 percent of Iranians are under age 30—and has little loyalty to the Islamic revolution. Given the fractured nature of the opposition, the United States and other pro-democratic countries will probably do more good by backing a nationwide vote than by backing any particular Iranian group or individual. To make such a referendum work, the Iranian people would need some international guarantees; America's pledge that it has no intention of installing another pro-U.S. monarch also wouldn't hurt. Iranian paranoia about foreign interference should not dictate our Iran policy, but neither should it be overlooked. The more we can leave to Iranians themselves, the better.

■ Those plucky Danes. Not only happy to remain, with the Brits, holdouts against the authoritarianism of the European Union, they handed center-right prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen a resounding victory in February's snap election; the Social Democratic leader, Mogens Lykketoft, has resigned. Under Rasmussen, who supported the Iraq war, Denmark has considerably tightened its immigration laws, with the number of entrants dropping by 80 percent since 2001, while the Liberal leader's tax cuts and skepticism toward Denmark's ballooning welfare system didn't do him any harm with the voters, either. What with the reelection of John Howard in Australia and Bush here, that makes three in a row.

■ Greenpeace should choose its targets more wisely. When

LEBANON DETONATES

Before the dust had settled, there
Was Condi honking like
An 18-wheeler racing toward
Damascus down the pike.
Though Jacques attended services
And walked beside the bier,
When Condi blasted Hezbollah,
He didn't seem to hear.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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Jeremy McInerney (Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley) is Associate Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where from 1994 to 1998 he held the Laura Jan Meyerson Term Chair in the Humanities. He also currently serves as chair of the University's Graduate Group in the Art and Archaeology of the Mediterranean World. He has firsthand archaeological experience at sites in Corinth, Crete, and Israel, and serves on the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece.

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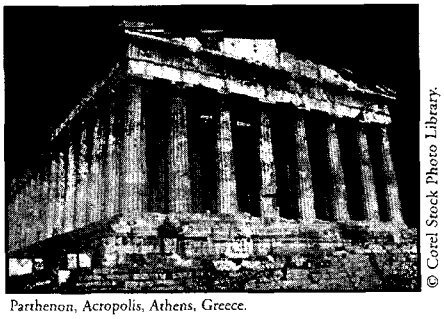

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Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece.

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THE WEEK...

35 protesters invaded London's International Petroleum Exchange—where open-cry trading in the rough-and-tumble pits is practiced—sounding fog horns, setting off alarms, and blowing whistles to signal their disenchantment with the oil business and capitalism and stuff, they were not greeted with the polite, bourgeois response they receive in more respectable quarters. Instead, dozens of young traders, refreshed by several lunchtime drinks, tackled the protesters and gave them a good kicking—all the way out the door and onto the sidewalk. Several protesters claimed that their foes had tried to push heavy filing cabinets onto them. "We bit off more than we could chew. They were just Cockney barrow-boy spivs. Total thugs," complained one nice, middle-class Greenpeacer nursing a bruised skull. "I've never seen anyone less amenable to listening to our point of view." Call us persnickety, but didn't Greenpeace pick on *them* by trespassing and disturbing their business?

■ The South Shropshire shall rise again! That and the Quorn, the Blencathra, the Warwickshire, the Bicester, and the Tynedale, among others, all fox-hunting groups whose hounds are threatened with extinction following the British ban on hunting with dogs that went into effect the other week. The Labour Left's desire to criminalize hunting and to classify hunt-supporters as felons stemmed not so much from some profound empathy with the animal kingdom—Tony Blair's Labour MPs, primarily elected in urban constituencies, have little or no experience with foxes, notorious predators, and doubtless failed to realize that the foxes will still need to be exterminated by farmers—but from spite, envy, and bossiness. The good news is, the law is so poorly written, huntsmen have already worked out ways to evade it—legally. Which is why it is crucial for the hunters to keep the infrastructure intact by continuing to go out to "exercise the hounds" and "lay down man-made trails," so that when the Tories come to power this iniquitous and stupid law can be overturned. And for those outdoorsy types who think the ban on riding to hounds has nothing to do with them, next to go, say the animal-rights fanatics, will be shooting and fishing. Thin. End. Wedge.

■ Richard Sander, a law professor and economist, has no objection to racial preferences in principle. But he has done a study that suggests that racial preferences in law-school admissions are having the perverse effect of reducing the number of black lawyers. Preferences are putting black students who would have done well at some law schools into schools where they cannot compete, and sometimes drop out as a result. Sander therefore thinks that preferences should be scaled back. His study puts statistical flesh on the bones of an old conservative argument about preferences. It has also drawn critics who say that preferences do help increase the number of black lawyers. Interestingly, these critics do not contest Sander's claim that law schools put a heavy thumb on the scale for black applicants. They do not, that is, repeat the official line that the law schools and the academy at large use for p.r. and legal purposes. To our mind, the fact that the universities feel obliged to lie habitually about their practices tells against those practices. That preferences may hurt black students is not the only argument against them; so is the deception. But we wonder if there is a deeper deception at work here. Are we quite sure that university administrators would stop employing preferences if they became convinced that they were counterproductive in the sense Sander describes? Are we sure, that is, that the purpose of preferences really is to help blacks (and Hispanics)? We suspect that the universities have their own imperatives, and that making themselves, and their students, feel good ultimately matters more to them than whether they are actually doing good.

■ The American Council on Education, a coordinating body for higher-ed institutions, reports that more and more students are refusing to answer the race question on their college applications. The number of students who declined to identify their race or ethnicity doubled between 1991 and 2001—from roughly 468,000 to 938,000—making the total number of unidentified students greater than the total number of Asian-American students. We wouldn't blame members of the purportedly privileged races (including Asians, already "overrepresented" on many campuses) from declining to identify themselves for reasons of self-interest. But there may be something more principled at work, or it could simply be fatigue—as Americans, increasingly of mixed ethnicity, tire of having to pick just one. Whatever the reason, it sounds like good news to us—and yet another reason to believe that college students these days are more sensible than their race- (and gender- and sexuality-) obsessed elders.

■ Harvard released a transcript of Lawrence Summers's controversial comments on the dearth of female scientists on the faculties of top universities. The transcript adds some important details to the story, but mostly it confirms what we already knew. Summers was suggesting that discrimination by universities such as his was not the only or even the biggest reason for the low number of female scientists there. The fact that women do most of the work of raising children, he said, is also a factor that keeps them from being able to put in the necessary hours to succeed in the top science jobs. Perhaps that fact reflects some sort of social failure, but it isn't the universities' fault. Summers also mentioned that "issues of intrinsic aptitude, and particularly of the variability of aptitude," could play a role. Men and women might not differ in average abilities, but there seem to be many more geniuses and morons among the men. This comment, above all, is the reason Summers is being pilloried. His critics are not saying merely that he interpreted this study incorrectly, or placed too much importance on that study. Three other university presidents—representing MIT, Stanford, and Princeton—have complained that his comments might send the wrong message to women. The *New York Times* has editorialized that while free scientific inquiry is all well and good, a university president should not be "provocative." The National Organization for Women wants Summers's scalp. Whether Summers survives as president—and just how many groveling apologies he will have to make—will tell us not only about the health of the ideal of open debate at our universities, but about whether they remain oriented toward the truth in the first place.

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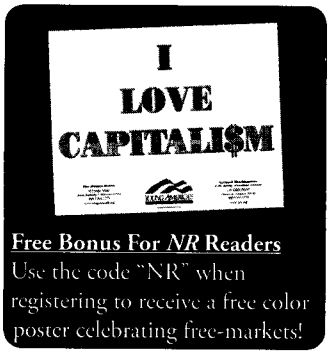

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THE WEEK...

■ Eason Jordan, chief news executive of CNN, resigned two weeks after telling a Davos panel that the U.S. military "targeted" journalists in Iraq. Rony Abovitz, a businessman attending Davos, posted the remark online, conservative bloggers (including those at NRO) made much of it, and the rest is history. Or the end of history, to hear traditional journalists tell it. "[T]oo high a price to pay" (David Gergen, moderator of the panel). "[T]he one-strike-and-you're-out nature of trial by Internet" (Howard Kurtz, *Washington Post*). "The salivating morons who make up the lynch mob prevail" (Steve Lovelady, managing editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*'s website). Everyone calm down. The blogosphere is not setting an agenda out of thin air. Either Jordan fell because he made an outrageous comment in wartime, or because Davos and CNN unaccountably refused to produce a videotape that would have shown he simply misspoke (the continued absence of the latter suggests the reality of the former). Pursuing such questions is the task of journalism. The harder bloggers work, the better journalists will do their job.

■ Susan Estrich, law professor and manager of Michael Dukakis's presidential campaign, has been living on the West Coast. So has Michael Kinsley, first to run *Slate*, now to run the opinion pages of the *Los Angeles Times*. Estrich tried to recommend some writer friends to Kinsley, typical behavior among the wise and the good. The friends she recommended were all women, whom she said were underrepresented in the *Times*'s pages—also typical behavior among the feminist wise and good. But when Kinsley didn't immediately adopt her recommendations, something went wrong. In an exchange of e-mail made public by both parties, Estrich accused Kinsley of "arrogance and audacity," then said, "People are beginning to think that your illness may have affected your brain" (Kinsley has Parkinson's disease). Meee-*ow*! Not since the bitch queens of Restoration comedy was there such a swipe. What illness has affected Estrich's brain? Self-righteousness *praecox*?

■ The *New York Times* has run a series of elegiac articles on the closing of 22 Catholic elementary schools in Brooklyn and Queens. This is the long goodbye to a lost geography of New York, when, as one reporter pointed out, neighborhoods were known by their parishes—Angels for Queen of Angels, Sacred Hearts for Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. More than the New York of *The Honeymooners* has vanished, however, for the Catholic schools had become gateways for striving minority parents who wanted the order and discipline public schools had increasingly failed to provide. Parochial schools became vulnerable because the dearth of vocations dried the pool of low-income nun-teachers, but vouchers or tuition tax credits might have kept them alive: Parents of parochial-school students pay double to educate their kids. The taxpayers will now end up bearing the cost in any case.

■ Hunter S. Thompson had some real talent—his prose kept a loose-jointed rhythm long after sense and humor had flown—but never was a writer, not even Truman Capote, so consumed by his persona. Thompson's breakaway hit was *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, an account of drug-addled antics there. With the encouragement of *Rolling Stone*, he moved his schtick to politics. Compared to the earnest, pro-American liberal Theodore White, who provided the incumbent gold standard of presidential reporting, Thompson seemed refreshing. How wrong that was. The comic set-pieces—giving his press credentials for Edmund Muskie's campaign train to a hippie—are sloppier, on re-reading, than one remembers, and the acres of prose in between are indulgent, repetitive, boring, bad. Thompson shot himself, age 67. R.I.P.

■ "Attention must be paid," said Willy Loman's wife of her husband in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Perhaps that was the problem with Miller's work—too much attention, not enough inspiration. His plays were labored and square; *All My Sons* and *The Crucible* are favorites of high-school drama departments, which is where they belong. Often the plays were dully wrong-headed. *The Crucible* implied that Communists in mid-20th-century America were as mythical as witches in 17th-century Salem, but who could believe that? (Millions of liberals, it turned out.) Miller died, age 89, in the strange twilight of his long eminence: Everybody knew who he was, nobody wanted to see his new plays. R.I.P. Now he belongs to the high-school stages.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Something Better

TURMOIL in the Middle East—what else is new? Only this: that the current turmoil may mark underlying shifts in the region's dynamics.

Iraq's electoral commission formally certified the results of the January 30 vote. The largely Shiite United Iraqi Alliance will have 140 out of 275 seats in the constitution-writing National Assembly, well shy of the two-thirds needed to pick the leadership. They will have to deal with the Kurds (75 seats) or outgoing prime minister Ayad Allawi (40 seats). The horse-trading has begun, in rooms filled, not with smoke, but with tiny cups of tea. Even some Sunni insurgents—greedy enough to be murderers, but realistic enough not to be fanatical about it—reportedly want in on the action. The spectacle of politicking is almost as heartening as the more inspiring performance of Iraqi voters.

In Israel, the region's sturdiest democracy, Ariel Sharon has put his long career, and conceivably his life, behind a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. Sharon's calculation is that Gaza was impossible to control and impossible to assimilate; so too was it impossible to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority. He decided to move on his own. With the providential death of Yasser Arafat, perhaps the Palestinians have decided to move too. Mahmoud Abbas met Sharon for a summit. Perhaps that could be dismissed as a photo-op—but Abbas also fired security personnel after Hamas lobbed mortar shells at the retreating Israelis; Arafat never did so much.

Lebanon had a democracy of a kind, based on a carefully rigged census, until the mid-Seventies, when the country became the sport of the PLO, Israel, and Syria. The Syrians

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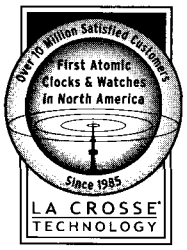

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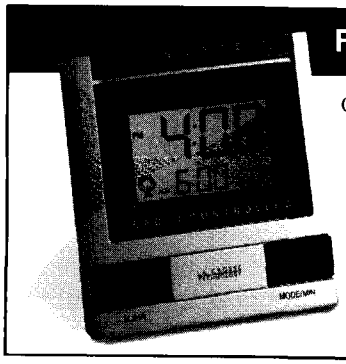

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essentially took over, dictating governments and battening on Lebanese businesses. A coalition of Sunni Muslims, Druzes, and Maronite Christians tired of their subjection. Bashar Assad—a bad argument for hereditary dictatorships—recently sought to thwart them by assassinating Rafiq Hariri, one of their leaders, in a spectacular bombing on the Beirut corniche. Hariri's murder and funeral has, however, only inflamed Lebanese nationalism.

Syria meanwhile draws closer to Iran. Both countries are the object of American ire for colluding with terrorists in Iraq (Syria harbors Sulayman Khalid Darwish, Zarqawi's banker and quartermaster). Iran forges ahead with its nuclear program, assuring the European powers, insincerely, that it does not intend to produce nuclear weapons. Iran also maintains its own force in Lebanon and the West Bank, Hezbollah, a terrorist organization which the United States wants Europe to list as such.

The common catalyst in many of these maneuvers is George W. Bush. He gave Sharon leeway and refused to shadow-box with Arafat. He was determined to bring Saddam down and to build a new Iraq. He tapped Iran as one of three world-class rogue states as early as 1999, and while he wishes the European negotiators well, he also said he would never "say 'never'" to the possibility of a preemptive American strike. Inspired by Natan Sharansky and his own good sense, he sees democracy as an agent for reform; galvanized by 9/11, he sees Middle Eastern reform as a paramount interest of the United States.

He faces many obstacles. The region has little to build on; theocracy, Baathism, romantic thuggery dominate its recent past. Many Europeans (and many Americans) do not share his vision, or his sense of urgency. America's failure to properly assess Saddam's WMD program will undercut any warnings regarding Iran.

But Bush is also tapping a yearning for something new. The Middle East resembles Ottoman Turkey at the end of World War I. In both cases, traditional structures (the Sultanate then, Arab nationalism now) failed; so have various radicalisms (the Young Turks then, Khomeini/al-Qaeda now). Reform is the only option, though now it wears a more populist, less secularist face than it did under Ataturk. From Tehran to Najaf to Gaza to Beirut people have seen the worst. We offer the chance of something better.

EUROPE

Stetsons and Berets

COULD it be that those smiles really were genuine? President Bush's trip to Europe was expected to be the occasion for manufactured bonhomie, but actual good feeling seemed to break out. Partly it was Bush's native charm at work—he's not the fanatical cowboy of European caricature. Partly it was circumstances. He had the wind at his back from what seem to be brewing political and diplomatic successes, from the Iraqi elections to an opening for an Israeli-Palestinian agreement to the U.S.-backed Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Bush pocketed increased EU help in training Iraqi forces and a strong joint statement with France deploring the Syrian occupation of Lebanon. As for the friendly atmospherics, usually they are quickly forgotten, but one never knows.

Yet a cloud hung over the proceedings, thanks to a pre-trip speech from German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder that called for managing transatlantic relations through the EU rather than NATO. This is a brazen power-play and a shot at the heart of the Atlanticism of the last 50 years. The move would increase French and German influence by essentially cutting the U.S., the leader of NATO, out of European security policy. By putting the EU and NATO on a theoretically equal footing, it would hasten the day when the EU is indeed—as the French have long said they want—a rival power bloc to the United States. Finally, it would diminish the influence of Europe's (often pro-American) smaller states as their voices would be swallowed by the German- and French-dominated behemoth in Brussels, now armed with the proposed EU constitution. It was particularly significant that it was Schroeder who gave this speech. The Germans have long been the swing vote in European affairs. The Brits have been strong American allies, while the French have consistently been more hostile.

If the continent's Schroeders are not blocked, Bush's trip may be remembered as the high point of U.S.-European relations, before an inexorable slide toward acrimony and competition. The first step to recovery, as they say in the support groups, is realizing that you have a problem. Encouragingly, Bush apparently has had such a realization. In an interview responding to Schroeder's speech, he called NATO "vital" and opposed the EU's becoming a "counterweight" to U.S. power. All his glowing (and occasionally quite powerful) rhetoric about American-European unity had as its backdrop this dispute, with an implicit message of dissent from the Chirac-Schroeder vision. Bush kept his references to the EU itself to a polite minimum (although Condi Rice, unfortunately, seemed to offer a measure of approval to the EU constitution in an interview with the *Financial Times*). As our John O'Sullivan argues, Bush will have to follow up his trip with hard diplomatic spadework, trying to keep the EU a loose confederation that encourages free competition and respects national sovereignty.

If transatlantic bonhomie is to remain viable in the future, this is among Bush's most urgent geopolitical tasks.

AT WAR

Jews on the Brain

WE all know that *something* was seriously wrong with the CIA's counter-terrorism operation in the 1990s—and now thanks to Michael Scheuer we are beginning to see what that something was.

Scheuer ran the CIA's bin Laden unit from 1996 until 1999. Last year, while still employed by the CIA, he published a book harshly critical of the Bush administration's War on Terror, *Imperial Hubris*. The book offered something less than a coherent argument. Sometimes Scheuer would call for raining mass

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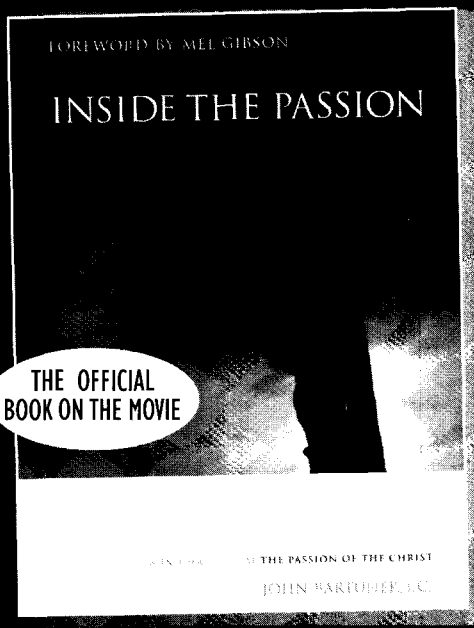
The Complete PASSION Resources



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An Insider's Look at The Passion of The Christ

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Combining rich insights on the theological, spiritual and historical meaning of the important events in the passion story along with explanations for the reasons behind the choices of art, sets, costumes, use of nature, and the screenplay of the film, this book will help you have a much deeper understanding of the profound significance of Christ's incredible sacrifice.

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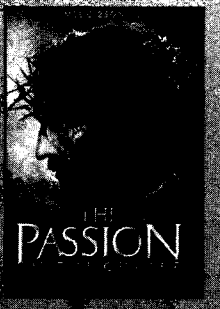

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fire and slaughter upon the Arab world—and then at other times he would argue that al-Qaeda was an essentially rational organization with limited demands that the United States could and should appease.

Frankly, the book was a mess. But since Michael Scheuer was always consistently anti-Bush (he likes to say that the president "would not know an American founder from an Atlantic flounder"), the mess received an enthusiastic response from the American media.

There's something else about which Scheuer is consistent: his conviction that U.S. foreign policy is controlled by . . . guess who?

At a recent Council on Foreign Relations event in New York, Scheuer described the U.S.-Israeli relationship as "probably the most successful covert-action program in the history of man." The Israelis, he asserted, "control the important political debate in a country of 270 million people. . . . I wish our clandestine service could do as well."

Challenged to elaborate, Scheuer explained, "Well, the clandestine aspect is that, clearly, the ability to influence the Congress—that's a clandestine activity, a covert activity. You know to some extent, the idea that the Holocaust Museum [is] here in our country is another great ability to somehow make people feel guilty about being the people who did the most to try to end the Holocaust. I find—I just find the whole debate in the United States unbearably restricted with the inability to factually discuss what goes on between our two countries."

Scheuer worries that he will be abused in the media for expressing his views candidly. Things, it seems, have come to a pretty pass if a man can be accused of anti-Semitism merely for suggesting that the U.S. is controlled by a secret Jewish conspiracy.

It says something alarming about U.S. intelligence agencies that a man who was entrusted with the job of defending the United States from its al-Qaeda enemy should instead have so thoroughly internalized and accepted that enemy's beliefs.

notes & asides

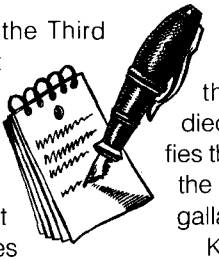
■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Alas! It has been a rough year for Kentuckians, not least because of the Hollywoodian attempt to trivialize any entity in the interest of "survival entertainment." In the cartoon on page 59 of the December 13 issue of NR, Lemuel, noted as a Kentucky Bourbon (whether of the royalty of France, Spain, Naples, or maybe a hybrid descendant of some sort from a long gone royal fugitive from the Indian wars—who knows?), is obviously caricatured as a barefoot hayseed with buck teeth and a noticeable vacant look. On the basis of the possibility that readers may actually consider a Kentuckian, ipso facto, to be a moron, allow me to lodge a gentle protest. While most of the world's bourbon is concocted in Kentucky, most of its citizens are a cut above imbecility.

Regards,
Jim Clark
Lexington, Ky.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I have been a subscriber to your magazine for many years. A letter in Notes & Asides in the December 13 issue took me back to a terrible day in my life, November 24, 1943, Thanksgiving Day.

I joined the U.S. Marine Corps on May 6, 1942, at age 17. After initial training at Parris Island and New River (now Camp Lejeune), North Carolina, my outfit was sent to the South Pacific. We eventually joined the Third Marine Division, which was being formed in New Zealand.

During this pause in the war, the Marines were island hopping, the ultimate goal being Japan. In July 1943, the Third Division moved into a forward position on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, preparatory to assaulting Bougainville, in the northern Solomons.



On November 1, 1943, the Third Marine Division landed at Empress Augusta Bay, on Bougainville, and heavy combat ensued against an entrenched and determined enemy that did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives to kill their enemy. (Sound similar to another war the gallant American kids are fighting?)

At this hectic period in my life, I was a member (a very proud member) of L Company, Third Battalion, Third Regiment, Third Marine Division. One of our highly regarded officers and good friends was Lt. John O'Neill. Lieutenant O'Neill commanded one of the rifle platoons of L Company. John O'Neill was well respected by those he led because their welfare was his main concern. He was a tall, affable Irishman who made sure that the Catholic guys attended Mass on Sundays, even in combat zones.

On the particular Thanksgiving Day in question, the only turkeys we received were from the barrels of Japanese rifles and Nambu machine guns. During the early phase of this battle, most of the command structure of L Company, the officers and NCOs, were killed or seriously wounded. Among the KIA was Lieutenant O'Neill. I was close to him when he was hit. As he was dying, his last audible words were the beginning of the Hail Mary. He was unable to finish the prayer.

The spirit of John O'Neill and the other young Marines who died on November 24, 1943, typifies the dedication, the courage, and the love of country exhibited by our gallant troops fighting in Iraq.

Keep up the good work in supporting them, our country, and our president.

Best regards and semper fi,
John M. Barry
Florence, Ky.

Dear Mr. Barry: Thanks for your vivid and poignant account of the death of a childhood friend, whose younger brother was my roommate at college. I hadn't known he died on my 18th birthday. Cordially,

—WFB

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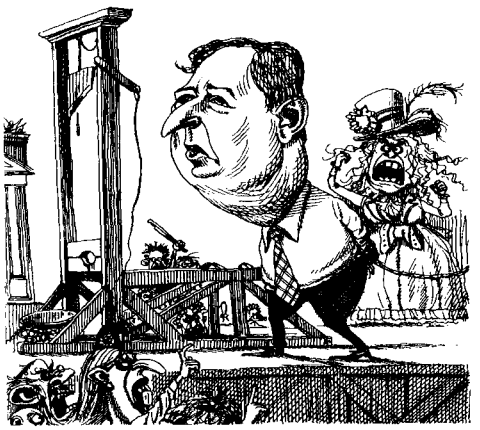

Summers to the guillotine

■ COVER STORY ■

'Teachable Moments'

But who will teach the teachers?

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

It recently came to light that University of Colorado professor Ward Churchill had slandered some of the 9/11 victims as "Little Eichmanns," who may well have deserved punishment for their participation in what went on "in the sterile sanctuary of the twin towers."

That led to cursory public examination of earlier, similarly insane tirades, and prompted calls for Churchill's resignation. The usual fiery counter-support—protests and news conferences—ensued, to the effect that the professor's right of expression and academic freedom were being imperiled. But like so many academic scandals these days, the original "little Eichmanns" comment—that innocent victims murdered at work by fascistic killers were comparable to a Nazi mastermind of the Holocaust—was just the torn scab revealing a festering sore beneath.

Churchill, it turns out, has no Ph.D., although it is the terminal degree required under normal circumstances at all such major research universities. Few, other than poets, novelists, and artists, are ever hired for tenure-track positions without it. Churchill probably also lied in claiming American Indian ancestry, thereby gaining entrée to favorable hiring and tenure considerations.

The disturbing story went on for days, as accounts of former Weather Underground ties, a past trip to Libya to cultivate dictator Muammar Qaddafi, and several prior arrests surfaced about Churchill. The public further learned that the $114,032-a-year Churchill may have distorted his Vietnam-era military service, and routinely misrepresented scholarly texts to fit his own particular revisionism.

What he was, is, and writes are little more than ostentatious castles of sand. Indeed, to read Churchill's essay "Some People Push Back: On the Justice of Roosting Chickens" (e.g., Mohamed Atta & Co. were not terrorists, but "combat teams" avenging America's killing of "500,000 kids") is to experience a colloquial, Chomsky-like rant—the fabricated statistics and inflammatory rhetoric made worse because his drivel is actually inside rather than outside his supposed field of ethnic-studies expertise.

In other words, Ward Churchill's plight gives us a glimpse into the strange world of the contemporary postmodern university of tenured ideologues, where professed identity politics, ethnic or gender chauvinism, and a disbelief in empiricism allow a con man to bully his way to guaranteed lifetime employment, and a handsome salary, and the right to say anything at all, no matter how inflammatory.

Well, *almost* anything at all—as we have learned in the almost simultaneous case of Harvard president Lawrence Summers, who, in some remarks, entertained the possibility that innate gender differences might in part explain why women are underrepresented in the hard sciences on university faculties. It was the sort of informal speculation that most Americans sometimes engage in and was not limited to genetics; his remarks wandered all over the larger context of socialization, child rearing, habit, custom, and gender discrimination. Qualifiers, backtracking, disclaimers, and cautious admissions characterized his speculations about innate difference.

Summers's comments before scholars were apparently meant to incite the sort of "conversation" that universities exist for, challenging orthodoxies, shaking up complacent thinking, and, yes, perhaps provoking hurtful emotions that galvanize further debate. In some sense, his was a highbrow version of the common popular inquiry about why white basketball players, for example, are underrepresented in the NBA: Is it that white adolescents don't grow up with the familiar culture of the court, that they don't have enough role models in the game, or, *terribile dictu*, that they simply don't jump as high or run as fast as African Americans—or all or some or none of the above?

At one time my university's classics faculty privately used to wonder why most of our best students in Greek and Latin were women, who almost alone went on to doctoral programs in philology. That disproportionate number of women classics majors prompted speculation behind closed doors that perhaps females just grasped languages more easily, or were more mature in their study habits at an early age, or did less partying. We also sometimes worried that working-class males thought that the classics were not muscular enough, or that they felt such a less lucrative career would impair their ability as breadwinners—or about anything other than the need to implement some sort of special program to address this statistical anomaly. After all, Homer wouldn't care if he were read by a woman or a man, and students seemed to worry not about their instructors' gender, but only about having exciting and competent professors.

ROMAN GENN

Mr. Hanson is the author of *A War Like No Other*, forthcoming from Random House this summer.

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But such unfettered inquiry about gender or racial imbalances is precisely what one doesn't do publicly on a university campus—unless perhaps one has the multifaceted exemptions of a Ward Churchill. So Summers touched the third rail of contemporary university life, by questioning one of the hallowed tenets of the victimization industry: Deliberate discrimination explains all inequality of result, precluding free discussion of other theories—and thus justifies compensatory collective benefaction.

The penalties of transgression are substantial even for a Harvard president, as we hear from the growing chorus demanding Summers's resignation. Veterans of the university culture wars all shuddered when a former Treasury secretary, who once adjudicated questions of the world's financial system affecting billions on the planet, was now reduced to asking forgiveness, not once but thrice, from self-appointed faculty watchdogs of gender. Conservatives were doubly confused by his attempts at reeducation, and didn't know quite whether to praise the honesty of this former Clintonite that got him into such a mess, or lament his subsequent apologies that may well get him out of it.

A certain Dr. Denice Denton attacked Summers, but also insisted that his peccadillo might be profitably exploited as a "teachable moment." But it turns out that Denton, the newly appointed chancellor of the University of California at Santa Cruz, had had her own "teachable moment"—though one that was as quickly forgotten by the media as Summers's was lasting. Again, in the bizarre world of academia, the chance tearing of a scab reveals quite interesting things underneath. Even before Chancellor Denton arrived at her new $275,000 job, she had negotiated a special university position as well for her girlfriend, Gretchen Kalonji, described as her partner of seven years, for the princely annual sum of $192,000—a billet that was specially created, unadvertised, and closed to all other job applicants. This novel variant of spousal accommodation was precisely the sort of old-boy networking in public hiring that transparent affirmative-action protocols were supposedly designed to stop. In contemporary university parlance: Was there not a worthy Latina or African-American woman who could have at least been interviewed for the job?

The Denton-Kalonji household will have a combined income of at least $467,000—plus up to another $50,000 granted to Kalonji for the expenses incurred in her "transition" in moving to the area. This supplement comes on top of a previous $68,750 granted to Chancellor Denton to move to the rent-free, service-provided University President's House.

Giving a couple already making almost a half-million dollars a year nearly $120,000 to move to California prompted outrage: not from the tenured feminists on the Santa Cruz campus, but from the university's blue-collar employees, secretaries, and maintenance staff. At a time of record state budget deficits, workers had not received a raise in three years. Meanwhile student fees had recently increased by 10 percent and the Santa Cruz campus had just gone through $14 million in state budget cuts the prior year. Among the elite of the nation's professoriate, class considerations always bow to gender sensitivity.

What are we to make of all these recent university teachable moments? The usual exegeses suffice: The contemporary campus has devolved into an Orwellian world in which the ends usually justify the means. Diversity really means no diversity of ideas. Unfettered expression is a code word for groupspeak of the Left. Academic freedom and tenure ensure timidity and monotony of thought. The champions of the oppressed and discriminated are, in fact, the affluent and privileged, whose antics are excused only by the irrelevancy of academic culture and properly deplored solely through the accidental discovery of a forgotten rant or taped remark.

Underneath all this is the disturbing fact that progressive campuses are charging their students tuition whose annual increases exceed the rate of inflation, while vocal professors have plenty of idle time on their hands and live lives that most Americans—or their own college staff members—can only dream of.

The verdict is still out on whether the once-outspoken Summers will survive. But the interesting question is not how long he can stay on as president—but precisely how much public remorse, counseling, and scripted apologies are necessary for a former U.S. Treasury secretary to win a reprieve from the upscale tenured oppressed who apparently run Harvard. **NR**

■ **THE MEDIA**

Gannongate

The weird story of a non-scandal

BYRON YORK

If you've been spending your time following developments in the fight over Social Security, or the nuclear showdown with North Korea, or the formation of a government in Iraq, you might have missed what has become, to some on the left, the biggest scandal of the Bush administration: Gannongate.

The name refers to Jeff Gannon, a previously little-known correspondent for a previously little-known conservative website called Talon News. For the last couple of years, Gannon was a fixture at White House briefings, where he often asked questions with a clear conservative slant (as opposed to questions from others with a clear liberal slant). Although the softballs Gannon lobbed to press secretary Scott McClellan irritated some members of the press corps, Gannon did not attract much attention until January 26, when President Bush surprised reporters by giving a news conference.

Toward the end of the session, after making the obligatory calls on television, newspaper, and wire reporters, Bush—for the first time ever in his presidency—pointed to Gannon.

"Senate Democratic leaders have painted a very bleak picture of the U.S. economy," Gannon began. "Harry Reid was talking about soup lines and Hillary Clinton was talking about the economy being on the verge of collapse. Yet, in the same breath, they say that Social Security is rock-solid and there's no crisis there. You've said you're going to reach out to these people. How are you going to work with people who seem to have divorced themselves from reality?"

The question was undeniably loaded, and media watchdogs on the left were outraged. By the afternoon of January 26, Media Matters for America, a website run by David Brock—the self-described former "right-wing hit man"—posted an article asking, "Is Talon a news organiza-

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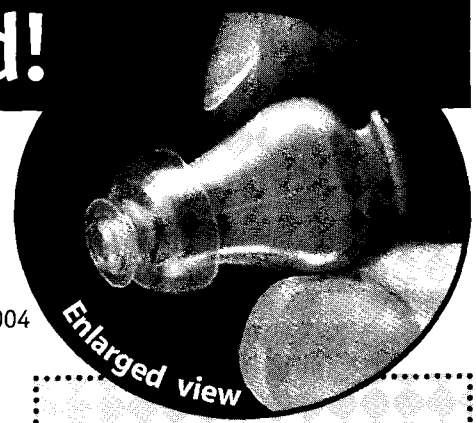

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tion or an arm of the Republican Party?" In coming days, Brock's site—which is funded by donors to Democratic 527 organizations (see "David Brock Is Buzzing Again," NR, May 24, 2004)—questioned the legitimacy of Talon News (it is an offshoot of an organization known as GOPUSA, although it has no connection to the Republican party) and the White House's judgment in allowing Gannon into briefings. Media Matters also revealed that Gannon sometimes lifted long passages from White House or GOP press releases and included them verbatim in his stories.

That was just the beginning. On January 28, a popular blogger named Atrios, whose actual name is Duncan Black and who is a senior fellow at Media Matters, published a brief note saying, "According to sources, Jeff Gannon's real name is not, in fact, Jeff Gannon. According to the same sources, his White House press credentials list him as 'Jeff Gannon'—they let him use his pseudonym." At the same time, several posters at DailyKos.com, one of the most heavily visited of the leftist websites, were doing their own research on Gannon. On January 31, a poster with the web name, "Radically Bitter," reported that Gannon's website, JeffGannon.com, was registered by the same entity that had also registered dozens of other websites, among them "hotmilitarystud.com" and "militaryescorts.com," which were both apparently offering gay-escort services.

That information, along with word that Gannon owed some back income taxes, bounced around the blogosphere for several days as Gannon denied that he had anything to do with the gay-prostitute websites. And then came more. On February 7, Atrios wrote that "sources allege that Jeff Gannon's real name is James D. 'JD' Guckert, though I have not been able to confirm this." Almost immediately, a number of left-wing bloggers found pictures of Gannon/Guckert posing nude for gay sites. His story that he had nothing to do with the sites collapsed. On February 8, Gannon resigned.

It might seem odd to some that what began as a story about one reporter's soft question turned into a hostile outing. The liberal bloggers claimed they were justified in their actions because Gannon was a "hypocrite" who, they charged, wrote anti-gay stories for Talon. But the best they could come up with was a 2004 story in which Gannon, playing off the oft-quoted saying that Bill Clinton was America's first black president, wrote that John Kerry "might someday be known as 'the first gay president.'" Kerry, Gannon continued, "has enjoyed a 100 percent rating from the homosexual advocacy group, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), since 1995 in recognition of his support for the pro-gay agenda."

It was not what one might call blazing hate speech, but it was enough for DailyKos, Atrios, and a gay activist named John Aravosis, who runs a site called AmericaBlog, to press the hypocrisy argument hard. But their anger

Jeff Gannon

seemed to go deeper than a resentment of anything Gannon had said or written. The real problem, they appeared to believe, was that Gannon was gay and a conservative Republican supporter of George W. Bush. That they would not accept.

When Gannon defended himself in an interview with the *Washington Post*, saying his critics were "willing to abandon their principles on the basis of trying to make me out to be a hypocrite," his prosecutors exploded in rage. "We're 'abandoning our principles' by going after you?" wrote Aravosis, addressing Gannon. "Don't lecture me about principles, Mr. Anti-gay by day, and gay-for-pay at night. You worked for anti-gay bigots, sucked up to an anti-gay president, helped him get re-elected, and expect us to, what, thank you for it?"

In today's media world, it was inevitable that the issue would find its way into the mainstream press. As the bloggers combed Gannon's background, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and cable-news channels picked up on the story. Not wanting to dig too deeply into the gay-sex angle, the mainstream reports focused on the question of Gannon's access to the White House.

Specifically, did Gannon have a "hard pass" allowing him permanent entry into the building? Was he allowed into the White House under an assumed name? And in any event, did he deserve to be part of the White House press corps?

Some of the answers weren't too complicated. For example, the White House said unequivocally that Gannon did not have a hard pass. Instead, he was allowed in on what are known as daily passes, in which the journalist calls the White House ahead of time and gives his name, date of birth, and Social Security number. Gannon, the White House said, entered under his real name, Guckert.

Nevertheless, critics still suggested that Gannon had special access. One of the most prominent was Keith Olbermann, host of the MSNBC program *Countdown*, who has made a virtual running feature of Gannongate. "How did James Guckert/Jeff Gannon get White House press credentials?" Olbermann asked on February 17, well after the White House had made clear that Gannon did not have press credentials. In the *Times*, Maureen Dowd wrote, "I was rejected for a White House press pass at the start of the Bush administration, but someone with an alias, a tax evasion problem and Internet pictures where he posed like the 'Barberini Faun' is credentialed to cover a White House that won a second term by mining homophobia and preaching family values?"

Seemingly nothing the White House said would convince the Olbermanns and Dowds of the world that Gannon did not receive special access. But the administration kept on trying.

"He did not have a hard pass," McClellan said in an interview with NATIONAL REVIEW. "He did not apply for a hard pass." McClellan said Gannon got into the White House the way other visitors do, using his real name. As for whether a representative of Talon News should have been considered for entry

ROMAN GENN

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into the White House, McClellan said he does not want to pass judgment on who gets in and who doesn't. "I've never inserted myself into the credentialing process here. I don't think it is the place of the White House press secretary to start picking and choosing who covers the White House. I don't think the press secretary should be drawing the lines, because then the question is, Where do you draw the line? Do you draw the line at advocacy journalism? There are people there who cross that line every day."

The reality of the White House briefing room bears McClellan out. The fact is, it's simply not too hard to get inside for a briefing, and people of all professional and ideological stripes are there. There is, for example, Russell Mokhiber, who runs a far-left newsletter and sometimes asks McClellan off-the-wall questions: Recently, he wanted to know whether President Bush believes the Sixth Commandment applies to the war in Iraq. Last year, Mokhiber took time off to volunteer for the Ralph Nader campaign. When he returned, McClellan said, at the briefing, "Russ, welcome back. It's been a while. How was the Nader campaign?"

That's not exactly an atmosphere of enforced ideological rigidity. And White House correspondents, by and large, want to keep the door as open as possible. "The whole story here is that there's a low bar to get into the White House, which I'm perfectly fine with as a journalist and as a member of the White House Correspondents' Association," says Ron Hutcheson, who covers the White House for Knight-Ridder newspapers and is president of the correspondents' group. "My outrage factor on this is pretty low."

But on the left, the outrage factor is very, very high. In recent days, DailyKos and other sites have featured elaborate conspiracy theories linking Gannon to all sorts of things, including the 2000 Florida recount and the CBS story on the president's National Guard records. Just for the record, there is no evidence that Gannon had anything to do with any of that.

But don't tell the far Left. "This is huge," wrote one poster, echoing the sentiments of many others. No doubt he really believes it, and no evidence—or lack of it—will convince him otherwise. **NR**

■ **PUBLIC POLICY**

Keep It Going

The robust economy, that is—and you do it by locking in the tax cuts

STEPHEN MOORE

DON'T look now, but the U.S. economy has just shifted into fifth gear and is now purring like a Porsche. The latest job numbers indicate that the unemployment rate has fallen to 5.2 percent—its lowest in more than three years—compared with 11 percent in Germany, 10 percent in France, and 8.5 percent in the entire workers' paradise of Euroland. Today a record number of Americans are working. And these workers are producing more cars, corn, cotton, computer chips, microchips, microwaves, and widgets than ever before. The latest Labor Department data indicate that worker productivity has surged by more than 4 percent for three years in a row for the first time in a half-century. Productivity improvements are the key to higher wage rates, so these are mighty welcome numbers for middle-class workers.

Other signs of bullishness abound. The stock market is up about 45 percent over the past two years and most of the $6 trillion in investor-class losses from the bursting of the financial bubble in 2000-01 have been recouped. America's economic-growth rate over the past year was 4 percent, which is about twice the progress our industrial-nation competitors have managed to muster. Business investment, a bellwether for growth, continues to surge. Inflation is surprisingly tame. Even the most worrisome economic indicator, the fall in the dollar, has started to stabilize as global investors notice that betting against the U.S. economy is foolish.

Almost no one in the chattering classes wishes to admit it, but lo and behold the Bush tax cuts are working as planned.

Almost no one in the chattering classes in Washington wishes to admit it, but lo and behold the Bush tax cuts are working as planned. The tax cut that packed the biggest economic punch was naturally the most controversial: the 2003 reduction in the dividend and capital-gains taxes to a rate of 15 percent.

The Left's opposition to this planned "tax giveaway to the rich" was frenetic and ferocious. Economists such as *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman ridiculed the tax cut as exactly the wrong medicine for the ailing economy, because it was oriented to goosing investment, not spending. Bush's critics assured us that the predicted larger budget deficits from the tax cut would lead to a catastrophic chain reaction: higher long-term interest rates, a stock-market decline, and a drought in investment and growth. Well, the skeptics have had to eat some crow. For example, long-term interest rates for mortgages are hovering near historic lows.

Even the tax-revenue consequences of the rate reductions in the personal-income, capital-gains, and dividend taxes have been surprisingly benign. Last year was the first since 2000 in which tax receipts at the federal level grew, rather than receded. And at the state and local levels of government, tax receipts are exploding, with most governors now managing surpluses again.

Larry Kudlow reports that federal tax receipts from non-wage income—i.e., from investments and capital—are up nearly 10 percent over last year. It's too early to tell for sure, but it may well be that the capital-gains and dividend tax-rate cuts paid for themselves by inducing more profit-taking by shareholders and more dividend payouts by firms. The Laffer Curve strikes again.

The dividend-tax cut was intended to cut the cost of owning stock and encour-

Mr. Moore is president of the Free Enterprise Fund and a senior fellow in economics at the Cato Institute.

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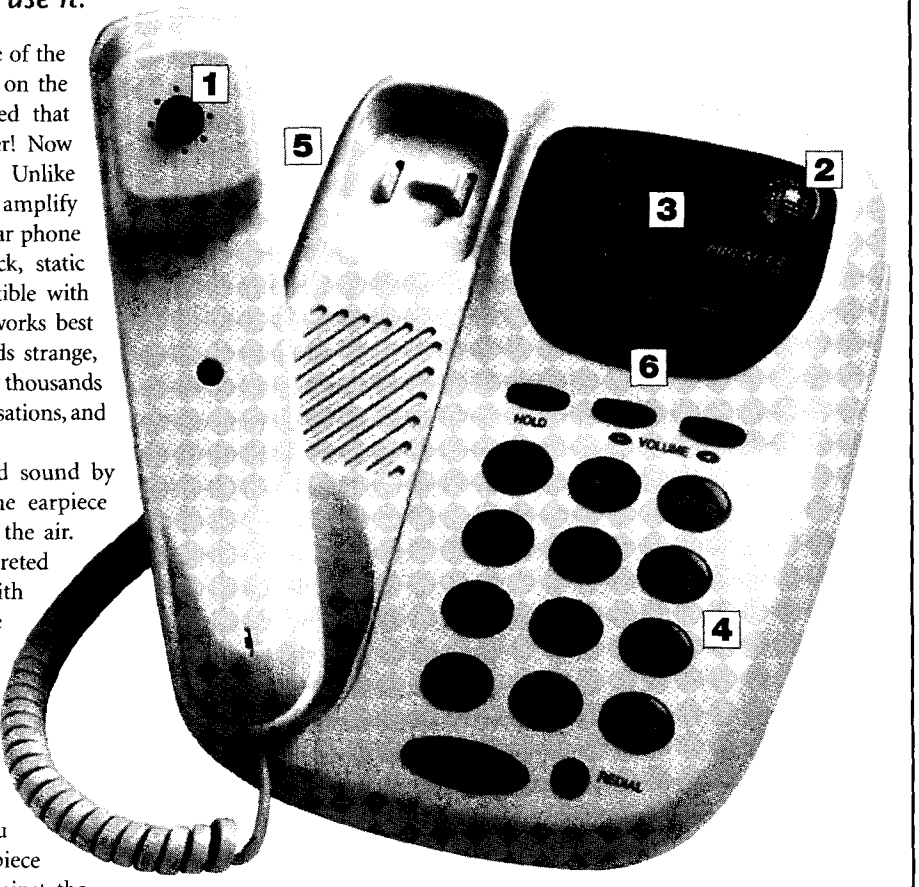

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age firms to pay out dividend checks to shareholders. A Cato Institute study in 2004 found that Fortune 500 companies paid out some $60 billion more in dividend checks than under the old tax regime. As Milton Friedman taught us: When you tax something less, you get more of it. It's happened again right on cue.

All of this is to say that if ever a policy worked as intended, it has been the Bush tax cuts.

That's why Republicans' recent backing away from the tax-cut agenda is so bewildering. Now that all of the evidence validates the case for the lower capital-gains and dividend taxes, many Senate Republicans, including George Voinovich of Ohio and Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, are flinching from the very policies that created the prosperity.

Arizona senator Jon Kyl, perhaps the most irreplaceable supply-side policy advocate in Congress these days, has made it a personal crusade to cement the Bush tax cuts in place. "When policies work as these tax cuts have, you make them permanent," he says. But he frets that the rise of deficit-phobics in the Senate has jeopardized the crown jewel of Bush's first-term economic agenda: the capital-gains-tax and dividend-tax cuts. Even the White House, with its goal of halving the budget deficit in four years, has intimated that it may be willing to downgrade the tax cuts on its list of priority items.

Bush and Congress should immediately lock in last term's lower tax rates. This was the most concrete promise Candidate George W. Bush made throughout last year's campaign. John Kerry clamored tirelessly for the immediate repeal of the Bush tax cuts for those Americans making more than $200,000 a year, and voters rejected the class-warfare plea. They apparently never fully comprehended the logic of how Kerry would add more jobs by raising taxes on the people who create those jobs. They understand it no better now that Nancy Pelosi and Ted Kennedy are doing the greed-and-envy whining.

Bush cannot back down. A victory here would carry with it the message to conservative voters—who have high expectations of long-awaited policy victories in 2005—that Republicans can actually do what they said they would do. Moreover, to keep this expansion going and attain the full effect of the dividend-tax and capital-gains-tax cuts, investors and business owners must be confident that the new long-term tax rate of 15 percent on investment can be taken to the bank. Ensuring that the highest income-tax rate stays at 35 percent is also imperative.

Ultimately, of course, the ideal would be to zero out the capital-gains and dividend taxes and to have a single-rate tax—and that is what former senators Connie Mack and John Breaux of the Bush tax panel should recommend. Since corporations have to pay a 35 percent corporate income tax on profits, the shareholder shouldn't have to pay an extra layer of tax on the dividend payments.

The current economic boom wasn't an accident or a natural result of the mythical business cycle. The revival kicked in almost exactly when Bush's felt pen signed his tax cuts into law in May 2003. The results have been more phenomenal than even the most optimistic supply-side advocates had anticipated. That's why the tax cuts should be cemented into the tax code, and why the adversaries of these tax policies should be fed some humble pie. After all, they earned it. **NR**

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■ **ABROAD**

Solidarity, Exemplified

The amazing story of the Czechs and the Cubans

JAY NORDLINGER

"I AM not one of Fidel Castro's favorite people," said Václav Havel in February 2001. The millennium is still young, but that should end up one of its greatest understatements. The former Czech president—and still the guiding spirit in that country—is a constant irritant to the Castro dictatorship, even a threat. So is the Czech government at large. Indeed, ordinary Cubans have no better friends than the Czechs, and their relationship makes an amazing story.

That relationship was highlighted by recent events within the European Union. In January, the EU moved to lift sanctions it had imposed on Castro in 2003. This was after the dictator's brutal crackdown, jailing 75 dissidents. Most remarkably, EU embassies in Havana started to invite dissidents—those still out of prison—to receptions and other official functions. But when the Socialist José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero came to power in Spain, he determined to remove the sanctions on Castro. And Spain has traditionally gotten its way on EU Cuba policy. Part of the drive was to prohibit invitations to dissidents; these had greatly infuriated the regime, and Zapatero wanted to play nice.

But the Czechs—new in the EU—would have none of it. They did everything they could to frustrate the new policy. Martin Palouš, the Czech Republic's ambassador in Washington, says, "We wanted to be EU partners; we were not keen to destroy their unity." But neither could the Czechs stomach the policy. And when dissidents in Cuba cried against it, "we reminded everyone that their voices had to be taken into consideration first." Note that "first"—it

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is a very Czech conviction.

On January 28, Havel weighed in, with his mighty pen. In an essay published in newspapers around the world, he excoriated the EU, saying it had abandoned principle, conscience, and reason. He spoke of his own time as a dissident, when it was important to meet with diplomats from democratic countries. But now, "one of the strongest and most powerful democratic institutions in the world—the European Union—has no qualms about making a public promise to the Cuban dictatorship that it will reinstitute diplomatic apartheid. The EU's embassies in Havana will now craft their guest lists in accordance with the Cuban government's wishes."

The EU "is dancing to Fidel Castro's tune. That means that tomorrow it could bid for contracts to build missile bases on the coast of the People's Republic of China." Etc. And "where will it end? The release of Milosevic? Denying a visa to Russian human-rights activist Sergei Kovalyov? An apology to Saddam Hussein? The opening of peace talks with al-Qaeda?" Havel concluded,

> It is suicidal for the EU to draw on Europe's worst political traditions, the common denominator of which is the idea that evil must be appeased and that the best way to achieve peace is through indifference to the freedom of others. Just the opposite is true. . . . I firmly believe that the new members of the EU will not forget their experience of totalitarianism and nonviolent opposition to evil, and that that experience will be reflected in how they behave in EU bodies. Indeed, this could be the best contribution they can make to the common spiritual, moral, and political foundations of a united Europe.

That tore it. Havel, and his fellow Czechs, effectively shamed the EU. There is some confusion about resulting EU policy—each government may have its own, convenient interpretation—but the general understanding is this: The EU's 2003 sanctions will be suspended until July, when policy will be reviewed. EU officials traveling to Cuba are strongly encouraged to meet with the opposition, in addition to the regime. Each embassy may decide for itself what to do about invitations. As Cyril Svoboda, the Czech foreign minister, said, "We are on our territory, and we can invite whomever we want." The Polish deputy foreign minister, Jan Truszczynski, said that if dissidents show up at the Poles' door, "we will not throw them out." Spain, France, and the others may be less hospitable. In any event, Fidel Castro is not pleased.

Dictators of this kind long for their opponents to be marginalized, invisible—treated as non-people. They have an interest in portraying them as criminals, stooges, and saboteurs. And the legitimacy conferred on them by dealings with democrats is a threat to absolute rule. Ambassador Palouš—like Havel, a former dissident—recalls what it was to be invited to the American embassy on July Fourth: indispensable.

In the old days, the relationship be-

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tween Czechoslovakia and Castro was very close. The governments were great trading partners, and the Czechoslovakians represented Castro's interests in Washington. All this changed when the democrats came to power. In due course, the Czechs began introducing human-rights resolutions against Castro in the United Nations. Before, this was a U.S. task. Says Palouš, "If the issue is the United States versus Cuba, that plays into Castro's hands. The issue, truly, is Castro versus the Cuban people. And we wanted to put this in a broader, more international context, eventually influencing some folks in Europe—lefties, what you here in the United States call liberals. We wanted to help them drop their bias, give individuals in this type of dictatorship the attention they deserve, and not succumb to cheap Che Guevarian mythology." In November 1999, Havel—with Lech Walesa and many others—sent a letter of solidarity to four Cuban political prisoners. This may seem a small gesture, but such actions appall and scare the Castro regime. In April 2000, the dictator sent some 100,000 subjects into the streets to march outside the Czech embassy.

In January 2001, he arrested two Czechs in Cuba who had met with dissidents—bearing such weapons as pens, a computer, medicine, and money. These Czechs were held for 25 days, in brutish conditions, before being released. On their return home, Havel invited them and their families to Prague Castle.

The next year, the last of his presidency, Havel went even further. On a farewell tour of the United States, he visited Miami, to meet with Cuban exiles, including a group of former prisoners. Many of these had spent over 20 years in Castro's gulag. They told Havel it was a supreme honor to meet him. He replied, "No, I spent only five years in prison—the honor is mine." While in Miami, he received a message from Oswaldo Payá, the Cuban democracy leader (whom Havel has pushed for the Nobel Peace Prize). Payá told him, "You, too, are a *plantado*"—the Cuban name for a long-serving political prisoner who cannot be broken.

Havel kept going. Through 2003, he made statements and waves, saying, for example, that "Cuba must not and will not remain a forgotten remnant of the Cold War, a kind of open-air museum of a system that discredited itself and failed." His work led to the creation of the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba, which held a three-day meeting in Prague last September. (Castro's press remarked bitterly that the center of imperialism had moved from Washington to the Czech capital.) Joining Havel were eminent, freedom-minded people from all over the world: fellow Eastern Europeans, Latin Americans, Americans, Western Europeans (including José María Aznar, Zapatero's predecessor as prime minister). All involved pledged to work relentlessly for democracy in Cuba, devising various means of doing so. Martin Palouš says, "I can easily call this a coalition of the willing."

ROMAN GENN

Vaclav Havel

One manifestation of Czech caring is the People in Need foundation, which keeps a faithful eye on Cubans, among others. Adrian Karatnycky, of Freedom House in New York, finds it "rather fascinating that there is an Eastern European human-rights establishment focused on the outside world." Organizations such as Freedom House have "new allies," which is "very exciting."

You might ask, Why the Czechs? Of all those with experience of totalitarianism—even quite recent experience—why are the Czechs so alert to Cuba? Frank Calzón, executive director of the Center for a Free Cuba in Washington, says, "It can be explained in one word: Havel. He is an extraordinary human being." Calzón points out that Havel's essay "The Power of the Powerless" circulates throughout Cuba (underground, of course). As with Solzhenitsyn, it does no harm that Havel, a dauntless advocate, can really write. Otto Reich, the former State Department official, says that Havel is important, yes, like Ronald Reagan. But there are legions of others who share the missions of such men, and carry them out. "The Czechs are amazing, at every level. I have seen them in operation. They cannot be intimidated: not by Castro, not by business interests, not by anybody." Small wonder that their western neighbors are prone to resent them: "an uppity little country that morally outclasses them."

Ambassador Palouš says that leadership on Cuba is part and parcel of Czech purpose. "Cuba is for us a defining issue: It helps define who we are, who are partners are, what our role in the world is."

Where others may be blasé about freedom, the Czechs are not. The 15th anniversary of the Fall of the Wall—last November 9—was little noted in Europe. But the Czechs marked it: with a celebratory concert in Miami. What better way to observe the anniversary, they thought, than to express support for Cuban democrats? Onstage was a rock group whose music had been banned by the old Czechoslovakian regime. Its frontman went on to serve with distinction in the Czech parliament. To Havel and his compatriots, Cuba is a faraway country—but not one of which they know nothing. They know a lot about it. More than Castro would like. **NR**

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■ CULTURE WATCH

Death of a Liberal God

Reacting to Arthur Miller

ROGER KIMBALL

ATTENTION must be paid to the attention that's been paid to Arthur Miller, playwright, darling of the Left, husband of Marilyn Monroe, self-appointed public moralist, and did I mention that he was married to Marilyn Monroe? The outpouring of sanctimonious twaddle that greeted Miller's death at 89 in February was partly queasy-making, partly comic.

The emetic side came from the pent-up liberal self-righteousness that erupted everywhere like a nasty boil. The comedy—if such ghastliness can really be called comic—followed from the yawning disproportion between cause (Miller's modest artistic accomplishment) and effect (wailing and gnashing of teeth as if a hybrid of Sophocles and Mahatma Gandhi had suddenly passed away).

The *New York Times* started its obituary-cum-bid-for-canonization on Page One, above the fold, and continued inside the paper for two full pages. "Mr. Miller grappled with the weightiest matters of social conscience in his plays," quoth the *Times*, "and in them often reflected or reinterpreted the stormy and very public elements of his own life—including a brief and rocky marriage to Marilyn Monroe and his staunch refusal to cooperate with the red-baiting House Un-American Activities Committee."

Everywhere one turned there were headlines telling you that "Attention Must Be Paid" to Arthur Miller's passing (his most famous, indeed his only famous, line is from *Death of a Salesman*, Miller's "American King Lear," according to one paper). The *Washington Post* dilated on the "shatteringly human frailty in his plays," the *Chicago Tribune* mourned the "the major social conscience of the world stage," and the British press—my, how they went to town. John Peter of *The* (London) *Times* explained how you always knew you were in "the presence of greatness" when you were anywhere near his friend Arthur, while Erica Wagner, also in the *Times*, demonstrated why the 20th century was really "the century of Arthur Miller." The British director David Thacker issued the considered judgment that Miller was "as great as any writer in the history of playwriting," excepting W. Shakespeare.

It really was nauseating—not just the inflated praise, wildly disproportionate to Miller's actual accomplishment, but the oleaginous moralism that accompanied it. Terry Teachout, offering a voice of sanity in the *Wall Street Journal*, wondered "how much attention would now be paid to Miller if he hadn't married Monroe, and if the House Un-American Activities Committee hadn't made the mistake of subpoenaing him in 1956 to testify about his Communist ties" (which, by the way, were extensive). Teachout didn't really wonder, of course. He knew that the answer is "not much."

Death of a Salesman crystallized the sentiment of anti-Americanism that has set left-wing hearts pit-a-pat for as long as anyone can remember.

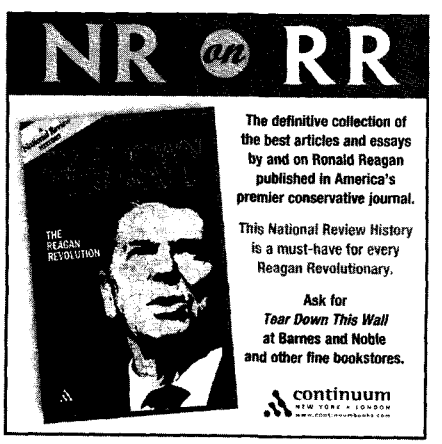
Most of what Miller wrote was what Teachout delicately described as "pseudo-poetic burble." *Death of a Salesman* became an instant hit when it appeared in 1949. Today, as I've said elsewhere, it looks like a period-piece melodrama. It's the same with Miller's other Big Play, *The Crucible* (1953), a heavy-going piece of allegorical didacticism about the Salem Witch Hunts—which hunts? Witch hunts; 1953; witch hunts: Get it, Senator McCarthy?

The truth is that Arthur Miller would be a footnote in the history of American culture were it not for 1) the accident of his marriage to the blond bombshell and 2) his status as a "moralist." The first earned him a place in the annals of celebrity, *vide* the section on voyeuristic curiosity about mildly salacious unions. The second earned him a spot in the annals of left-wing hagiography. You can't read a paragraph about Miller without being told that he was a "moralist," a man with a "social conscience" so big that doctors everywhere should have been alarmed. But as Mark Steyn observed, when it comes to Arthur Miller the word "moralist" is "code for leftie."

Why is *Death of a Salesman* regarded so reverently? Not because of the play's merits but because it crystallized the sentiment of anti-Americanism—the American Dream gone south—that has set left-wing hearts pit-a-pat for as long as anyone can remember. Willy Loman is thought to embody a certain species of rancid American ambition and idealism—so the poor schmuck had to commit suicide, you see. It really wasn't his fault, it was the fault of The System that he had bought into. Miller's patrons and admirers were not so naive, of course. *They* never subscribed to the American Dream, even if, like Miller, they were conspicuous beneficiaries of it. No sir. They pitied Willy Loman because he was a patsy, but they held him in contempt because he embodied everything they hated about America.

Well, not everything. *The Crucible* touched on the rest of the indictment. Miller could hardly go to the toilet without comparing some facet of American life to the Salem witch trials (which, by

Mr. Kimball is managing editor of *The New Criterion*. His most recent book is *The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art*.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the way, were nowhere near as awful as they have been made out to be). In 1998, Miller took to the pages of the *New York Times* to warn that the investigation into President Clinton's extracurricular activities bore an ominous resemblance to, yep, the "iron vituperation," "the gut-shuddering hatred" of those "Salem ministers roaring down on the Devil as though they would grind their heels into his face."

What really bothered Miller, of course, was what bothered the Left establishment: that Kenneth Starr should actually have done the job he was hired to do. Time may have led us to forget the vicious demonization of Ken Starr: For the Left, he was Antichrist of the Week. Miller did his bit to contribute to the calumny. You remember Toni Morrison describing President Clinton as America's first black president? Miller liked the idea, and opined that the president's closeness with blacks "may have helped uncork the sewer of contempt on his head," i.e., "the Starr report."

Arthur Miller

All of Miller's public interventions—his displays of "social conscience"—bore the mark of his experiences with *The Crucible*. And why not? He writes an allegory about the House Un-American Activities Committee and is instantly hailed as a martyr, saint, genius, hero, and demigod. The Left loved Arthur Miller because he helped codify and perpetuate one of their dearest myths—the myth of McCarthyism.

Dear Reader, did you know that in the late 1940s and 1950s America was in the grip of a fearsome, paranoid witch hunt against supposed Communists and other alleged traitors? According to this myth, the assault was fearsome because it blighted thousands of careers and lives, and it was paranoid because it was essentially groundless. Sen. Joseph McCarthy ranted on about Communist spies, but really, the myth of McCarthyism maintains, there were no spies to speak of, only liberals like . . . well, like Alger Hiss.

The historical basis of this myth has been refuted again and again. The Soviet archives, for example, showed beyond dispute that the State Department was home to numerous Soviet spies and that the American Communist party, far from being a beneficent homegrown expression of the "progressive" spirit, was in fact a tool of Moscow ideologues. As for Alger Hiss . . .

But myths die hard. They are not subject to ordinary refutation. When it came to Hiss, for example, his defenders said he was innocent, not guilty, right up until the moment they allowed that he was innocent even if guilty. The emotional core of the myth of McCarthyism—a core that is invulnerable to mere facts—is that species of liberal sentimental benevolence that, fired by the socialist ideal, recoils from America and the spectacle of "selfish individualism" it provides. This is why the myth of McCarthyism is so dear to liberals: It allows them to keep alive the pleasing sense of their own virtue. Indeed, like God for Voltaire, had Joseph McCarthy not existed, he would have had to be invented.

Among other things, the myth of McCarthyism lays bare an old conundrum that dogs liberalism. I mean the fact that in seeking to create the maximally tolerant society one also gives scope to those wishing to create the maximally intolerant society. The French philosopher Jean-François Revel once observed that "democratic society is the first in history to blame itself because another power is trying to destroy it." It needn't be that way. Democracies, too, are based on affirming certain values and proscribing others. The liberal paralysis comes when the will to defend those values is stymied by unswerving commitment to an abstraction called "tolerance." The myth of McCarthyism is so dear to liberals because it helps them avoid confronting this fact. That is why Arthur Miller, a conspicuous guardian and perpetuator of this myth, was lavishly rewarded by liberals with the patent of secular saint-hood. **NR**

ROMAN GENN

■ **THE COUSINS**

Duty Calls

It certainly calls Elizabeth II—but what about her eldest son?

THEODORE DALRYMPLE

In the latest episode of the British Royal Family Soap Opera, the Crown Prince has finally got his girl. In short, Prince Charles is to marry Camilla Parker-Bowles, the love of his life, and his mother, the Queen (who is also head of the Church) has given her blessing to the union.

It is a truism that it isn't easy being a Royal Family these days. It used to be so much easier. When the existence of social hierarchy was taken for granted, someone had to be at the top of it, rather like Aristotle's Unmoved Mover. But nowadays, not only is Jack as good as his master, he also insists upon repeated public recognition of the fact. How, then, can a Royal Family be justified? What is it for? Upon what sentiments may it depend for its support among the population?

Certainly, it can no longer count on the discretion of the press. Difficult as it may be now for the average Briton to recall it, there was a time not so very long ago when the press would report nothing about the Royal Family except in blandly respectful or gushingly obsequious prose. The life of the Royal Family was portrayed as a fairy tale with the witches removed, a kind of eternal happy ending. Completely and self-consciously unrealistic, this reportage was so dull that only bored housewives could read it. But now we live in an age when everyone has a right to full knowledge, down to the most intimate details, about anyone in whom he takes an interest. The Information Age is also the age of tittle-tattle; and tittle-tattle is the enemy of mystique.

Dr. Dalrymple is the author of *Life at the Bottom: The Worldview That Makes the Underclass* and of *Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses*, due from Ivan R. Dee in May.

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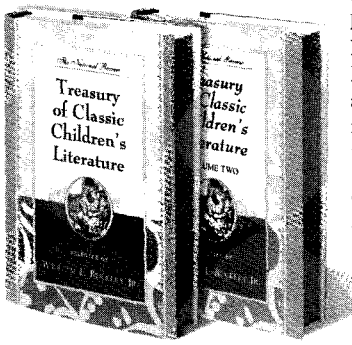

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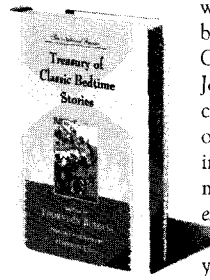

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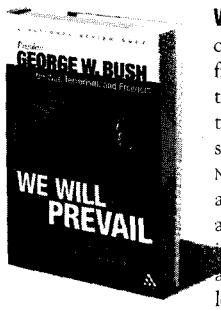

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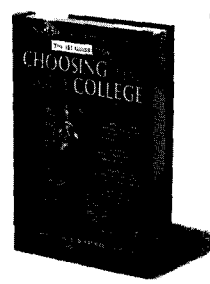

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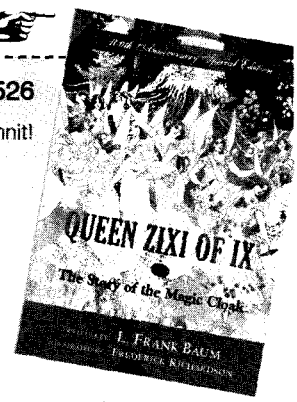

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If the Royal Family is no longer protected by mystique, but rather is a group of hereditary celebrities competing with other celebrities for space on the front page, what can protect it from the kind of carping criticism that must ultimately destroy it? Can it claim to incarnate the nation, and thus act as a focus for patriotism? But British patriotism is dead—although a nasty form of nationalism remains a minority interest—while Welsh and Scottish patriotism consists mainly of self-pitying hatred of the English. There is no quicker way of emptying a room in Britain than to play the national anthem, which causes the acutest embarrassment. How can a God in whom no one believes be invoked to spare the life of a woman to whom all now believe themselves equal or even superior?

Is, then, the Royal Family supposed to act as moral exemplar? The historical precedent in this regard is not altogether encouraging; and the idea is in any case antithetical to the hereditary principle. The monarch is monarch because she is the last monarch's closest descendant, not because she never omitted to say her prayers or clean her teeth, or put away her toys at night. It is possible for a perfect swine to have a better claim to the throne than a veritable saint.

It is true that several of the past few monarchs have behaved well to the point of dullness or impersonality. It would be difficult to find a duller or better-behaved man than George V, for example, the most interesting aspect of whose life was probably his manner of leaving it. Rumors persist that his doctor gave him an overdose of morphine so that he would die in time for his death to be announced in the august pages of *The Times*, rather than in those of the more demotic *Evening Standard*.

The present queen has behaved so well, for so many years, that she represents the greatest modern exemplar of devotion to duty known to me. She has been diplomatic and charming to people she must have abhorred from the bottom of her heart; she has endured thousands of the dullest events of which it is possible to conceive, all without so much as a yawn; she has had to eat disgusting food as if with relish; and not for half a century has she once said in public what she really thought. These feats of iron self-control have been performed because of her conception of her duty towards the nation as constitutional monarch. By comparison with her, mere ambassadors have carefree, bohemian lives.

It is not so much that she has no actual, real, personal personality, as it were: It is that that her public personality is entirely coterminous with her public duty, to which she has subjugated everything else. Modern people cannot understand this: They cannot conceive of a duty so imperative that the expression of one's own personality—beautiful and unique, as almost by definition it must be—is unimportant beside it. From this fundamental incomprehension comes the now widespread criticism that the Queen is a cold, unemotional person. But she believes that it is not her job to be emotional: Her emotions are for strictly private occasions. Her job is to perform her duties to the best of her abilities, and never mind what she is feeling.

Needless to say, this is not a view of life with which much of the population below the age of 60 now sympathizes. The Queen spent many of her formative years during the war, when there was much talk of duty. Prince Charles spent many of his formative years during the 1960s, when there was much talk of self. The Royal Family, however abnormal its world may be, has not proved immune to generational change. Prince Charles is a child of the Sixties: He believes that his personal drama counts, and he therefore feels the need both to express and to explain himself: not as deeply as his first wife, Diana, did, but much more deeply than his mother.

The Prince's position is a very difficult one; it is not impossible that he will be 75 when—or perhaps I should now say if—he inherits the throne (I mean if there is a throne to inherit). Three-quarters of a century is a very long time to wait to do the only job for which one has been destined since birth. But this is not the only explanation of his personal difficulties. As a child of the Sixties, he has difficulty in entirely suppressing his personality in public in the name of public duty. He, like all the rest of us, is too important for that. He needs causes—some of them well-chosen, like that of the disastrous state of architecture in Britain, and some ill-chosen, like that of alternative medicine—to express himself; but he also needs from time to time to bare his soul. For modern man, baring his soul is the only proof that he actually has one. The Queen, his mother, is deeper than that.

The Prince's own son, Harry, is further proof that the Royal Family is not immune to generational change or wider cultural influences. Pictures of Prince Harry, with his vulgar snarling expression, and reports of his less than amusing exploits, prove that he is fundamentally no different from so many of his British compatriots: drunken, arrogant, violent, and charmless.

When and where will the British Royal Family Soap Opera end? Sooner than I once thought possible, or than the Queen deserves. Unless there is cultural reversal, her descendants will one day move among the Umbertos, Farouks, and Zogs of the world. **NR**

DARREN GYGI

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How To Be a Hero of Liberty

You may have to gild the lily . . .

RAMESH PONNURU

WHEN historian Doris Kearns Goodwin was accused of plagiarism, Laurence Tribe rushed to her defense. The *Harvard Crimson* had published an editorial demanding that Goodwin resign from Harvard's board. Tribe, a professor of constitutional law at Harvard Law School, wrote a letter to the *Crimson* criticizing its editorial as "utter nonsense." His friend Goodwin was guilty of some "sloppy" and "inadequate" footnoting—but of nothing worse. "[U]nlike any number of historians and others who have been caught falsifying as fact what was, in truth, fantasy—either about their own lives or about the events they were chronicling—Goodwin has not been accused, and could not plausibly be accused, of ever purveying false or misleading information, the cardinal sin for any scholar."

Tribe wrote that letter in March 2002. A more recent plagiarism scandal has hit closer to home. In the fall of 2004, Joseph Bottum made the case, in *The Weekly Standard*, that Tribe had himself ripped off the words of another scholar. Many passages in his 1985 book *God Save This Honorable Court* bear strong resemblance to passages in Henry Abraham's 1974 *Justices and Presidents*. After Bottum's article appeared, Tribe admitted his "failure to attribute some . . . material" to Abraham and said, "I personally take full responsibility." Harvard said it would investigate the matter.

Embarrassing, certainly. But if Tribe's defense of Goodwin makes sense, then perhaps it could applied to this lapse too: At least Tribe didn't present "fantasy" as "fact." Tribe's colleague Alan Dershowitz came to his defense, just as Tribe himself had defended Goodwin and another colleague charged with plagiarism, law professor Charles Ogletree. (They're quite a band of brothers there in Cambridge.) "If the *Standard* were to do the same minuscule analysis of every word in the books written by the paragons of the right, they would find much the same thing," said Dershowitz.

But in another recent incident, Tribe appears to have committed precisely the offense that he identified as "the cardinal sin for any scholar"—and it's an incident too weird for anyone to maintain with any plausibility that every scholar does the same.

A 'PRIVATE STORY'

In the spring of 2003, *The Green Bag*, a legal journal, published an essay by Tribe called "Public Rights, Private Rites: Reliving *Richmond Newspapers* For My Father." It is a memoir of Tribe's first argument before the Supreme Court, in 1980. The case grew out of a Virginia murder trial. The judge had closed the trial to the public, including both the victim's family and reporters. Tribe represented the newspapers for which those reporters worked.

Tribe argued the case just two weeks after his father died. That fact, his essay explains, emboldened him to do something daring: to invoke the Ninth Amendment to the Constitution.

The Ninth Amendment is the one that reads, "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." In other words: Just because the Constitution lists a bunch of rights doesn't mean that we don't have other rights that aren't listed. Even people who think that's a fine principle have been a bit puzzled about how the amendment should affect government in practice, and in particular about what judges should do with it.

There are people who think that the courts should strike down a lot of laws restricting people's conduct because those laws violate "unenumerated rights." That idea horrifies others, who think that judges would then have a license to invent any right they like and nullify any law they don't. For much of American history, the courts have in practice sided with the latter camp. They have not used the Ninth Amendment to overthrow laws and vindicate liberties.

Tribe's essay casts himself as a kind of hero for breathing life into the amendment—and overcoming a lot of resistance to his doing so. His client had decided not to ask the Supreme Court to take the case. Tribe had to get the client to reverse its decision. He did, and then got the Court to review the case. He thought that a First Amendment freedom-of-the-press argument would not suffice to win: He would have to turn to the Ninth Amendment.

"But the Ninth Amendment, I learned as I briefed *Richmond Newspapers* and as I found myself being lobbied hard by the pillars

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of the media bar, was barely to be mentioned in polite society, much less was it ready for prime time," Tribe writes. "Who was I, an utter novice at Supreme Court advocacy, to buck the conventional wisdom on something so basic?"

Tribe then answers his own question:

> Well, I was a lawyer who'd taken a case because he believed in it, who'd been teaching and would teach generations more of law students about the kinds of questions the case raised, who'd gone on record a couple of years earlier in a treatise, American Constitutional Law (1st ed. Foundation Press, N.Y. 1978) (now in its third edition as of 2000), on most of the issues the case touched, and who cared a lot more about keeping faith with what he'd feel bound to write and teach in years to come, and with how he thought the Court should be approached, than with what the Pooh-Bahs of the establishment thought of him. That's who I was. And am. So the Ninth Amendment argument stayed in. And, I'm happy to report, in the end it hit its target.

By early February 1980, Tribe had received the State of Virginia's brief defending its power to impose secrecy and started working on his reply brief. At his wife's suggestion, he called his parents a day before their wedding anniversary. The next day he felt "a peculiar numbness," as though he were "*dying*" (emphasis Tribe's). He then heard that his father "had collapsed" and "was in critical condition." He flew home, and thought he saw a shooting star through the airplane window. "Somehow I knew it was my father. I cried all the way across the country. My father had died before the plane landed in San Francisco."

Tribe kept working on the case even though he had an "unfocused, disoriented frame of mind." There was nobody else, he writes, who could have stood in for him. He received "urgent phone calls imploring me, above all else, to forget that 'crazy Ninth Amendment argument'"—but he soldiered on.

> Literally all I recall about writing the reply brief—which ended (I've just reread it) with a call upon the Court to vindicate "a tradition . . . demonstrably central to the public awareness and institutional accountability that define our form of government"—is that I refused to use that brief as a vehicle for backing away from the Ninth Amendment, whose affirmation of rights unwritten and unseen I think I was almost beginning to identify, in some then still unconscious way, with the mystery of why I'd fortunately agreed to call my father the night before his anniversary; of why I'd felt the knock of doom before our phone had rung; and, above all, of what I'd seen streaking across the predawn sky out of the airplane window.

Tribe continues, "Reflecting now on my resolute commitment to arguing the case in Ninth Amendment terms . . . I think my grief may have permitted me to see a bit more clearly through the fog of superficial arguments and objections and may have steeled me against the kinds of eleventh-hour distractions and importunings that co-counsel, meaning to be helpful, are prone to inject as a Supreme Court argument nears."

Tribe's private loss also helped him to see the importance of the case for murder victims' families: Just as seeing his father in an open casket had helped him process his grief, so would seeing a trial help them. When he spoke to the Court, Tribe "felt emboldened by the circumstances not to pull my punches."

When Tribe's allotted speaking time was over, he recounts in his *Green Bag* essay, Chief Justice Warren Burger kept him at the podium to ask him about other possible unenumerated rights ("he had quite a litany" of rights "to ask about"). "I imagine—this is pure supposition, not actual memory—that I must have worked at suppressing a huge grin, realizing, as I must have realized by then, that the Chief, not someone I'd tentatively counted in my corner when the day began, was seemingly asking for help in sketching what was to become the analysis in his plurality opinion. . . . Our back-and-forth must have gone on for a couple of minutes."

Tribe won the case. Chief Justice Burger's plurality opinion for the Court referred to the Ninth Amendment as one of the reasons to side with Tribe's client. Tribe notes that the Supreme Court has rarely cited the Ninth Amendment in this fashion. The next time a plurality or majority would do so was in the 1992 *Casey* decision, when the Court mentioned the Ninth Amendment among several others as reasons to reaffirm its holding that abortion must be legal. Tribe does not quite say that his work in *Richmond Newspapers* paved the way for *Casey*. The reason for his essay was to explain how his "private story . . . affected what I had dared to say on that February day" in 1980. "[M]y main reason for deciding to tell the story here was just that it's too large a part of who I am to leave it permanently submerged."

WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

And if that story casts Tribe as a forgotten hero of the Ninth Amendment—and thus, to some people, as a hero of the story of American liberty . . . Well, the essay leaves the impression that Tribe doesn't mind that too much. The *Richmond Newspapers* decision, he writes, was a "landmark."

But the record in front of the Supreme Court does not corroborate important parts of Tribe's story. He didn't argue his case in Ninth Amendment terms. Other parties in the case did, but not Tribe.

The Ninth Amendment did not appear in the statement Tribe filed asking the Supreme Court to review the case. There, Tribe said that Virginia had violated the First, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments. At this stage of the litigation, it was the lawyers for the American Society of Newspaper Editors and the American Newspaper Publishers Association who made the Ninth Amendment argument, in their friend-of-the-court brief.

Tribe's brief on the merits of the case did refer to the Ninth Amendment—but the references hardly justify the billing Tribe gave them two decades later. Tribe opened and closed a seven-page section of his 72-page brief with references to the amendment. But in between he mostly discussed Fourteenth Amendment precedents. There was no discussion of the history of the Ninth Amendment—nothing about how James Madison viewed it, nothing about the Court's prior treatment of it. The previous case in which the Ninth Amendment had figured most prominently was *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* (1965), in which the Court had struck down a law against contraception. Tribe didn't mention it. The Ninth Amendment was a mere rhetorical flourish in this brief. The State of Virginia felt no need to include any Ninth Amendment analysis in its own brief, since there was nothing much to respond to.

It was outside parties who emphasized the Ninth Amendment arguments at the merits stage. The newspaper editors and publishers weighed in with another friend-of-the-court brief. Their brief discussed Madison and *Griswold*. Chief Justice Burger's opinion

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would later make the same points about Madison's role in enacting the amendment that this brief made. E. Barrett Prettyman Jr.—certainly a heavyweight establishment lawyer of the era—filed another friend-of-the-court brief favorably mentioning the Ninth Amendment claims of the editors and publishers. Prettyman filed it on behalf of interests including the National Association of Broadcasters, the Associated Press, and the National Press Club. The State of New Jersey filed a brief, too. It had a short discussion of the Ninth Amendment that cited *Griswold* and a law-review article on how the amendment pertained to the openness of trials.

Tribe, you will recall, says that he refused to use his reply brief to back away from the Ninth Amendment—even though, he says, he was under great pressure to do so. But, again, there wasn't much to back away from, so it's hard to see why anyone would have thus importuned him. The reply brief said almost nothing about the Ninth Amendment (perhaps because Virginia had ignored it). Tribe's reply brief contained only one stray reference to the earlier brief's comments about it.

Laurence Tribe

When he argued the case in front of the Supreme Court, Tribe didn't mention the Ninth Amendment even once. (An audio transcript of the case is available online.) Fifteen minutes into it, a justice asked Tribe "just what provision of the Constitution [the Virginia statute] violates as applied in this case." Tribe replied, "I think that it violates the Sixth Amendment, and the First, and the Fourteenth." He spent the rest of his opening argument on the First and Sixth Amendments. Virginia's lawyer, unsurprisingly, didn't mention the Ninth either. Tribe got to make a rebuttal, in which the words "Ninth Amendment" again did not pass his lips.

The exchange with Chief Justice Burger did not go as Tribe lays it out. Burger asked Tribe, "What provision of the Constitution did the Court draw on to make a presumption of innocence part of our fabric?" Tribe answered that the presumption is implicit in the Constitution because it is central to the legitimacy of the justice system. Burger then asked whether there were any "hints" that this view "was the tradition in 1787 and '89 and '90 and '91." Tribe said that there were. That was the whole exchange. Burger asked about no "litany" of rights. (Tribe's *Green Bag* essay attributes some other comments to Burger, but judging from the audio transcript he appears to be mistaken about who said what.) The idea that Burger was asking for "help" appears to be the professor's self-serving fantasy. Based on my analysis of the public record, so does the related contention that Tribe is responsible for the Ninth Amendment comments in Burger's opinion.

If we believed that "the Pooh-Bahs of the establishment" had lobbied Tribe to abandon the Ninth Amendment, we would have to conclude that they had succeeded in their aim. But it certainly looks as though establishment figures were more willing to press forward with Ninth Amendment claims than was Tribe himself. Whether or not *Richmond Newspapers* really is a Ninth Amendment landmark, it is not one because of Tribe.

Contacted by NR about the discrepancies, Tribe said that he did not remember various details about the case or the essay. He did not recall whether he had reviewed the audiotape before writing his essay or had gone from memory. He said that his essay never stated that his briefs or his oral argument had made an extensive Ninth Amendment pitch—which is true: He didn't say it in those exact words, but very strongly implied it. Pressed on that point, Tribe said that the essay only implied it "maybe [to] someone who wants to find in [the] essay something that isn't true."

Tribe continued, "I certainly wasn't intending to suggest that I [had] made any argument that I didn't make. What I was discussing in the essay was my own thinking about why the case was important. If you read anything more into it, that's your problem." There were good reasons for not pushing the Ninth Amendment too hard, he said. There was "a pervasive allergy to the Ninth Amendment" that made it "not polite to mention." But "I do remember very much that it figured very much in my sense of the importance of the case and it figured very much in my arguments with other lawyers."

There's a problem with Tribe's explanation. The *Green Bag* essay did not say that Tribe thought the case important for Ninth Amendment reasons but considered it imprudent to make that argument to the justices. It said that he had "dared to say" things, with the strong implication that those things concerned the Ninth Amendment, to the Supreme Court. It said that he had *resisted* the counsel of more timid souls. If he didn't mean to imply that the amendment played an important role in his briefs and oral argument, then what's the point of saying that people had told him to back off? Nobody would have warned him to back off from a private thought that he had no intention of expressing to the Court. Nor does it make sense for the professor to congratulate himself for resisting the pressure to back off from this private thought.

Tribe suggested that my article would be an "ambush." He said, "It's about my father's death. I would take that rather personally. . . . I can't say I look forward to reading [the article] but I look forward to refuting it—in my father's memory, you can say. I have to say that this [conversation] hasn't been a pleasure."

Tribe called back a few hours later. He remembered something. "By the time of the oral argument, I had figured out a way . . . to argue the case orally without invoking the Ninth Amendment, which I knew some people were allergic to." He again denied that the *Green Bag* essay had said that he had invoked the amendment. In other words, he stuck to (and elaborated on) the same explanation as in our first conversation.

In the Goodwin controversy, Tribe suggested that presenting fantasy as fact was a terrible offense for an academic—worse, indeed, than plagiarism. In the *Green Bag* essay, published a year after his defense of Goodwin, he appears to have committed precisely that offense while also taking credit for the achievements of others (Chief Justice Burger and anyone who actually influenced him). It is a sad and curious thing. Laurence Tribe has had an extraordinarily successful career. He has won many cases in the Supreme Court. His influence on the legal academy is deep. No one could reasonably ask for more in the way of fame or honors. Yet he can't seem to resist gilding the lily. **NR**

ROMAN GENN

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■ GEOPOLITCS

A Cowboy in Brussels

President Bush's trip and the great reckoning with Europe

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

My Washington taxi driver had heard the president's speech in Brussels over the radio. He thought it had handled the Europeans well: Bush had set out to assure them of America's goodwill, but had not made any substantial concessions on policy. It seemed to have succeeded—maybe because the Europeans themselves were less united than they sometimes appear. The enlargement of the European Union had brought in member states from eastern and central Europe; these wanted the economic benefits of EU membership, but also the security of the Atlantic alliance. They would therefore be reluctant to root all their foreign-policy decisions within the EU, preferring to keep the NATO link with the U.S. It was a complex situation, but that was useful in itself—since it gave Bush room to maneuver against the Franco-German axis.

Well, okay, the taxi driver was a Nigerian student with a master's degree in international relations. Still, his analysis was more sophisticated than any on offer from the establishment media; I drew on it substantially in a TV appearance. Even so, it understated the real significance of Bush's speech and his European trip—namely, that for the first time there are signs that the U.S. is beginning to respond intelligently and subtly but forcefully to the threat to American interests posed by the EU.

This stiffening of the U.S. stance is likely to be obscured, perhaps deliberately, by the general agreement that the Bush trip is an exercise in charm and reconciliation. It *is* such an exercise, of course, and none the worse for that. Everyone from Jacques Chirac to Richard Perle accepts that such reconciliation was needed after the ill-natured disputes over the Iraq war. But different Europeans have different motives for seeking it.

America's friends in Europe—and a majority of both NATO and the EU supported the Iraq war—want transatlantic reconciliation for its own sake but also because that would help heal the splits dividing Europe. Those who want the EU to be a rival or counterweight to the U.S., on the other hand, seek reconciliation as a way of soothing Washington into going along with their project. Whenever the Americans get riled up over some hostile move by the EU—for instance, its intention to lift the arms embargo on China—there is a stampede of eminent Europeans rushing to assure the U.S. that the transatlantic relationship is sacred and inviolable. These assurances, however, often turn out to be extremely temporary. The reconciliation provided by this trip is, *inter alia*, another dose of NyQuil.

TAKING BUSH SERIOUSLY

On this occasion, there was a further reason for reconciliation that most Europeans would prefer not to mention, i.e., their suspicion that George W. Bush is a far more substantial political leader than they had thought even a few months ago. That suspicion goes well beyond accepting that he will be leading America for the next four years or even that his reelection showed a majority constituency for his policies. It is the suspicion that he may be proving right (or at least less wrong) over Iraq, the wider democracy project, and foreign policy in general. The Iraq elections were plainly a catalyst for this feeling, but it is beginning to extend into other questions. In fact, when Europeans look at the range of international problems facing the Atlantic alliance, they struggle to suppress the sinking feeling that the U.S. is handling its crises rather better than the Europeans are handling theirs. Consider:

Iraq. A long struggle is ahead, but most Iraqis have warmly embraced a democratic future. As William Rees-Mogg pointed out in the London *Times*, although terrorism often succeeds against a foreign colonial power, it never defeats a domestic democratic majority.

Israel/Palestine. Washington's contention that serious progress towards peace was dependent upon the removal of Yasser Arafat has been confirmed with almost comic speed. The EU's long and passionate embrace of the old terrorist now looks counterproductive as well as disgraceful.

Syria/Lebanon. Europe, especially France, long ago withdrew its protection from Lebanon, where a partial democracy had existed for 30 years. It has also turned a blind eye to Syria's support for Iraqi terrorism. But the murder of the former Lebanese premier has aroused both the international community and the Lebanese people. While Bush was speaking in Brussels, an anti-Syrian pro-democracy demonstration that invoked his name was taking place in Beirut. From this position of unexpected strength, Bush generously suggested that the U.S. and France were united in their support for Lebanese democracy. He thus acted on a wise man's words: "Love your enemies; they'll hate it."

Iran. This is the Middle East crisis the Europeans have selected as a demonstration of what their diplomacy can achieve. Thus far, it has allowed the Iranian mullahs to significantly advance their nuclear reprocessing program.

In the face of these contrasts, it is hard to maintain that Europe represents skilled diplomacy and the U.S. heavy-handed militarism. Rather the Europeans are instinctively averse to change, shrink from dealing with crises, cling to what Bush in his Brussels speech called the "false stability" of dictatorships (or other existing political structures), and take refuge in diplomatic displacement activities like Kyoto. The U.S. (with its superpower responsibilities), on the other hand, knows it will have to deal with the crises eventually, seeks to do so sooner rather than later, tries to identify and assist countervailing local movements that would reduce or remove the threat at its source, and does not needlessly disavow the use of force as a last resort (since the threat of force is itself a diplomatic tool). For the moment at least, the U.S. approach seems to be working better.

Slightly humbled (but only slightly), the Europeans were therefore happy to cooperate in a festival of reconciliation. Concessions were exchanged—for instance, NATO agreed to

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send military- and police-training teams into Iraq—and the time-tested rhetoric of Atlantic cooperation was given another outing. Bush's speech in particular was rich in tributes to NATO, the common values of the Euro-Atlantic community, and the extraordinary power for good that the Atlantic alliance possessed. For 40 years these phrases have been the clichés of international gatherings. This time, however, they took on fresh power and meaning. Why?

Samuel Huntington has defined conservatism as the set of ideas men reach for to defend institutions that have come under fundamental attack. Until a crisis arrives, those ideas may sound flat and platitudinous—the stock of society's wisdom is better than our own unguided reason, etc.—but they suddenly acquire meaning from a crisis and become vital political truths. NATO and the Atlantic alliance came under fundamental attack one week before President Bush arrived in Brussels. At a meeting of the Wehrkunde security conference in Munich, German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder dismissed NATO as out-of-date and increasingly irrelevant, suggested that the transatlantic alliance should in the future be a sort of EU-U.S. condominium, and called for a committee of "wise men" to outline this new model of U.S.-European cooperation.

In a sense this was not new. European think tanks have been humming with such ideas for the past decade. France has been hostile to NATO and American hegemony since the Sixties. And Germany has been consolidating its alliance with Paris for the last decade. Still, it was rightly seen as a watershed. Germany has long been regarded by the U.S. as Europe's pivotal power: If the British were reliably Atlanticist and France reliably not, the Germans might sometimes hesitate but they would always in the end come down on the side of America and NATO. (Why, surely NATO membership was a symbol of postwar German respectability second only to the Deutsche mark—Oh dear!) Yet here was the German chancellor taking the French side not over a one-time dispute such as Iraq, but over the very organization of the Atlantic alliance.

Schroeder's proposed reorganization would have three obvious consequences—each of them worrying to someone. First, it would replace an alliance always led by the U.S. with a partnership of "equals." That in itself would be a destabilizing move. It would also be the necessary precondition for the emergence of the EU as a rival and counterweight to the U.S. Whatever assurances Europeans give about never intending to play such a hostile role, they would plainly have taken a giant step towards being able to do so. Second, the reorganization would tend to revive the fading leadership of France and Germany in the EU itself. At present they exercise less influence on diplomatic and military affairs than on social and economic ones because the current forum for the former is NATO, where the U.S. presence often blocks and restrains them. Once the EU becomes Europe's military forum, however, the Franco-German axis would be a better place to steamroller its own preferred solution through and then present it to the U.S. as "the European view." Schroeder's proposal would, finally, cut bilateral links on military-diplomatic matters between the U.S. and individual European countries. Debate on this has generally (and reasonably) centered on its threat to the Anglo-American "special relationship," but its threat to the interests of smaller EU nations may be almost as significant. Leaders of smaller European states usually love the EU because it elevates their importance internationally; but they (and especially the East Europeans) also value their direct access to the U.S. in NATO. They do not want to have to talk to the Americans through an interpreter in Brussels.

NEOCONS FOR EUROPE

Though German officials tried to play down the significance of Schroeder's speech, this was a revolutionary proposal—and one that laid bare the ultimate destination of the European integration that until now the U.S. has more or less unreservedly supported. But what can be done about it?

The underlying problem is that conservatives have not worked out a clear and realistic response to the rise of a rival and not especially friendly European superpower. Liberals—including Jeremy Rivkin, Charles Kupchan, and T. R. Reid, all authors of recent books on Europe—welcome the rise of Europe for varying but perfectly logical reasons. Some do so because it represents a check on the U.S. power they fear, others because its social-democratic ethos is more to their taste, and still others because they think a multi-polar world would be more stable. Some realists have interpreted the rise of an anti-American Europe as an inevitable response to U.S. predominance and counseled accommodation to it. But the conservative foreign-policy establishment as a whole has largely averted its gaze from this European threat because they cannot easily imagine a solution to it. On this issue, paradoxically, they are behaving rather like Europeans.

One understandable reason for this reluctance is that the European development appears inevitable—and when something seems inevitable, people will step forward to justify it. But who would have thought that those stepping forward to justify accommodating to a rival superpower Europe would be drawn from the ranks of neoconservatism? Yet two recent articles by neoconservatives—one by Tod Lindberg in *Policy Review*, the other by Robert Kagan in the *Washington Post*—advance in different ways the proposition that Europe and America can and should be two equal cooperating halves of a single Western alliance.

According to Kagan, America would tackle the problems requiring muscle and hardware while Europe would draw backward nations into civilized behavior by "the lure of [EU] membership." This division of labor suits the U.S. very well and constitutes a new kind of "burden-sharing" that appeals to Europe and should appeal to America. Thus, the U.S. should seek to push Britain even further into a European state since the Brits tend to favor the kind of "liberal imperialism" (such as admitting Turkey) that would complement America's more muscular diplomacy

Two faults may be found with this argument. The first is that, since the end of the Cold War, the EU has *not* spontaneously practiced the kind of absorptive imperialism that Kagan recommends. NATO, under American pressure, led the way in admitting central and eastern European states in the 1990s when the EU was still raising barriers against them. NATO, not EU, membership was the catalyst for democratic, market, and human-rights reforms. If the EU grows both more powerful and more

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independent of the U.S., as Kagan happily predicts, why should it defer to such pressure in the future? Would it not rather pursue its interest in a warm reciprocal relationship with Putin's Russia?

The second flaw is that pushing a pro-American Britain into an anti-American EU in the hope of transforming the latter may transform the former instead. That, indeed, is what seems to be happening. In recent days the British government has withdrawn its objections to the lifting of the arms embargo on China. More generally, as the British are more integrated into the EU, they inevitably adapt to a Continental political culture that is less concerned with liberty and more with stability. And even if they retain enough sympathy for U.S. policies to wish to support an American military intervention somewhere, EU rules may not allow them to do so. Clashes of interest may therefore divide the West seriously.

Lindberg, for his part, does not deny that clashes of interest may occur—but he doubts that they can be truly significant or lead to serious conflict because Europe and America already form a single transnational ethical community. One foundation of that ethical community is an agreement that force or war cannot be allowed to settle political disputes. Of course, there is an inevitable paradox here since, as Lindberg allows, if any state or political party violates the basic understandings of the ethical community, then force or war may well be required to restrain or correct it. What makes this a practical flaw rather than merely a logical one is that ethical communities are neither internally stable nor immune to transformation from outside.

Christendom, for example, was a transnational ethical community. But it was unexpectedly divided by the Reformation and tens of millions of Europeans died in the ensuing wars of religion. From the outside—from the standpoint of a Chinese mandarin, say, or that of a Muslim ruler of India—the differences dividing Christians would have seemed extraordinarily trivial. But they had momentous consequences—and they were essentially unpredictable a hundred years before. Europe at present is experiencing a massive Muslim immigration that in countries such as Holland is undermining the ethical consensus of the community. It is quite possible that, on current demographic trends, Europe will have serious community and thus ethical differences both internally and with the U.S. These differences could lead to serious clashes of foreign policy in relation to Islamic countries and movements. Even the example of ethical discipline that Lindberg quotes approvingly—the EU sanctions imposed on Austria for electing a "genuinely right-wing party"—is ambiguous, since the sanctions represented the ethical consensus not of European peoples but of European elites; from the elites' standpoint, the American GOP is hardly less objectionable than Austria's Freedom party. And, besides, the sanctions failed and the Freedom party remained in government. So accepting the rise of a rival European superpower because it is a partner in a transnational ethical community is by no means a risk-free policy.

What Bush did was to signal in speeches and media interviews that the U.S. is seriously concerned about growing Western disunity and would strongly defend the traditional institutions of Atlanticism; but he advanced these concerns in the positive form of praise for NATO's achievements rather than as a niggling disparagement of the EU. He stressed very strongly that there was almost nothing the West could not achieve in world politics provided that it remained united. He said repeatedly that NATO was and would remain the main institution of the Western alliance. He cited NATO and the U.S. presence in Europe as the foundation stone of the long European peace—an accurate observation, but one that runs counter to the official European doctrine that it is an EU achievement. He was politely skeptical about those expressions of European integration—such as the developing EU defense system—that run clearly counter to American and NATO interests. And he kept the rhetoric of European integration to a surprisingly decent minimum.

All this represented a dawning recognition that the EU and Western disunity are growing problems for the U.S. Not everyone in the administration seems to have grasped the point—Secretary Rice was praising the interminable European constitution as a good thing only the other day. But it is a start. Now conservatives will have to consider what to do about it. **NR**

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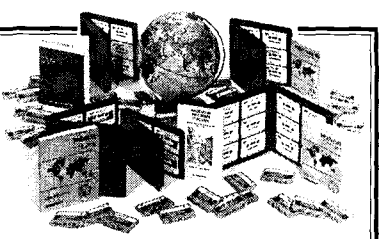

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■ AT WAR

The Face of Gallantry

What one Iraqi's case tells us about the struggle for the Middle East, and for freedom

DAVID FRUM

In a recent "Diary" for National Review Online, I told the terrible story of Mithal al-Alusi, a gallant Iraqi politician and democrat whose two sons and bodyguard were gunned down in Baghdad on February 8. I invited NRO readers to send messages of condolence for Mithal, which I would forward to him in Baghdad. Within 48 hours, I had received almost 200 letters, many of them from the parents, relatives, and friends of active-duty U.S. soldiers and Marines.

The letter-writers were inspired by the gallantry of Mithal's response to his terrible loss. He told Radio Free Iraq that

> my children, three people [in all]—one of my bodyguards and two of my children—died as heroes, no differently from other people who find their heroic deaths. But we will not, by God, hand Iraq over to murderers and terrorists.
>
> We will pave the road for peace. If [the attackers] thought that by attempting to kill Mithal al-Alusi, the advocates of peace in Iraq will be stopped, then they have made a grave mistake. We will be calling for peace. We will be calling for peace with all neighboring countries. We will be calling for peace with all countries of the region. And we will be calling for fighting terrorism by any means.

Many letter-writers were impressed too by the apparent reason for the terrorists' targeting of Mithal: his support for peace with Israel.

After the overthrow of Saddam, Mithal was appointed the head of Iraq's De-Baathification Commission. In this capacity he attended a September 2004 conference on terrorism in Herzliya, Israel, thereby becoming the first and only Iraqi official ever to travel to the Jewish state. He opened his remarks with a stunning declaration: "I would like to thank the United States for liberating Iraq from Saddam Hussein's terror."

Mithal explained his actions in an article now posted on NRO:

> Last month, I became the first Iraqi official ever to visit the State of Israel. My visit outraged my colleagues in the provisional Iraqi government. I was fired from my job as general director of the Supreme National Commission for De-Baathification, expelled from my political party, and stripped of my personal security detail: a potentially deadly punishment for somebody in my position in today's Iraq. I was even threatened with criminal prosecution.
>
> Yet I have good news to report too. I have been surprised—and pleased—by the support I have received from Iraqi intellectuals and from a very large number of ordinary Iraqis. They recognize that I didn't go to Israel for the sake of Israel. I went to Israel for the sake of Iraq. . . .
>
> In Iraq's own sovereign interest, we must have peace. Those Iraqis who talk of Israel as the enemy are in reality looking for justifications to inflict violence on their fellow Iraqis.

Something in these words—and in the price Mithal paid for uttering them—touched a profound chord in NRO readers. Let me quote from just one letter I received for Mithal, addressed directly to him:

> As I consider your courageous commitment to liberty in the face of such personal loss, as I consider the photos of brave Iraqis holding up their purple fingers, flaunting their votes in the face of evil, I find myself thinking that you are nothing like us. We do not have that kind of honor and courage. I am shamed by how weak and craven we Americans have become in our safety and wealth. We are not like you. . . .
>
> I am sorry for your loss, and I pray God will comfort you and reward your country and your people for such sacrifice. I don't know that I could show such resolve in the face of such loss.

How should we understand this outpouring of sympathy for an Iraqi democrat from readers and supporters of the premier conservative periodical in the United States?

President Bush had made it clear well before the beginning of combat operations in Iraq that establishing free institutions there would be a major war aim of the United States. In a major speech at an American Enterprise Institute dinner on the eve of battle, he said, "The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. They encourage the peaceful pursuit of a better life."

These ideas are not exactly unprecedented on the American right: Ronald Reagan often expressed similar beliefs. In his famous speech in Westminster in 1982, Reagan insisted on "man's instinctive desire for freedom and self-determination" and argued that "it would be cultural condescension, or worse, to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy."

But it's also true that at least as many important conservatives—perhaps many more—rejected Reagan's view. Russell Kirk, the revered conservative thinker, warned at the end of the Cold War against the assumption "that the political structure and the economic patterns of the United States will be emulated in every continent, for evermore." Kirk argued that such an approach to foreign policy would lead to disaster: "An imposed or induced abstract democracy thrust upon peoples unprepared for it would produce at first anarchy, and then—as in nearly all of 'emergent' Africa, over the past four decades—rule by force and a master."

Many of those who opposed and still oppose the Iraq war do so for reasons quite similar to those advanced by Kirk. They say that American-style democracy is not for everyone, and predict that if

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the populations of the Arab and Islamic Middle East are ever allowed to govern themselves they will opt for ideological extremism, religious fanaticism, and external aggression. And high on the list of those peoples supposedly unprepared for democracy are the Iraqis.

But this time around, the people most vehemently advancing such views are not Republicans and conservatives but liberals and Democrats—including the Democrats' nominee for president in 2004, John Forbes Kerry.

"I have always said from day one that the goal here . . . is a stable Iraq, not whether or not that's a full democracy," Kerry told reporters after a town meeting in Harlem last April. "I can't tell you what it's going to be, but a stable Iraq. And that stability can take several different forms." Kerry's chief foreign-policy adviser, Rand Beers, followed up by explaining that the Kerry camp regarded George W. Bush's aspirations for democracy in Iraq as "too heroic."

In the months leading up to and following the election, Kerry's elegantly expressed skepticism has bumped its way down the intellectual hierarchy to become something close to the dominant point of view among American liberals. Which is how it happened that the very day before the violent attack on Mithal al-Alusi, *Slate* magazine featured a literary attack on the Syrian-American democrat Farid Ghadry by a writer named Elisabeth Eaves:

> So, you're an Arab exile. You've prospered in the United States. You've got lots of influential neocon friends. And now you want to overthrow the evil Baathist dictator back home. Here's the catch: Your name, fortunately—or perhaps unfortunately—is not Ahmad Chalabi. What are you supposed to do?
>
> This is the predicament in which a man named Farid Ghadry finds himself. (Remember that name: He could soon be cashing millions in U.S. government checks.)

The rest of the article continues to scorn both Ghadry and Chalabi in the same vein, as if nothing could be more gigglingly absurd or excruciatingly uncool than to devote oneself to the fight against tyranny in one's native land. I know this voice. I remember it from the days of the Cold War, when it was the fashion among a certain kind of elegant intellectual to mock the testimony of East Bloc émigrés with their comical Slavic accents and cheap, ugly clothes. Older friends tell me it was much the same in the 1930s, when some brave souls tried to tell the truth about Hitler's Germany to the uninterested ears of the British elite.

Maybe the best response to this self-satisfied dismissal was delivered by Susan Sontag, a woman whose many mistakes were redeemed by, if nothing else, this speech she delivered in New York City in 1982:

> I have asked myself many times in the past six years or so how it was possible that I could have been so suspicious of what [Czeslaw] Milosz and other exiles from Communist countries—and those in the West known bitterly as 'premature anti-Communists'—were telling us. Why did we not have a place for, ears for, their truth? The answers are well known. We had identified the enemy as fascism. We heard the demonic language of fascism. We believed in, or at least applied a double standard to, the angelic language of Communism. . . .
>
> The émigrés from Communist countries we didn't listen to, who found it far easier to get published in the *Reader's Digest* than in *The Nation* or the *New Statesman*, were telling the truth. Now we hear them. Why didn't we hear them before, when they were telling us exactly what they tell us now? We thought we loved justice; many of us did. But we did not love the truth enough.

The skeptics are right up to a point: The culture and history of the Middle East do create grave difficulties for democracy—so much so that those who champion democracy are called on to show extraordinary courage and commitment. They must face terrible dangers, endure terrible suffering, mourn terrible losses—as Mithal did and is doing. And oh, just to add to their burdens, they must bear disdain from much of the Western press, and from radicalized professors of Middle Eastern studies who instruct Western publics that indeed the killers of Mithal al-Alusi's sons represent Islam and the Arab world more authentically than Mithal and those like him.

But precisely because it is so difficult to be a democrat in the Arab and Islamic Middle East, Arab and Islamic democrats like Mithal al-Alusi deserve all the more honor.

When people talk about the clash of civilizations, ask yourself: On which side of that fault line would you put Mithal al-Alusi? He has sacrificed more to uphold the values of our civilization than almost any of us on the Western side of that supposed line will ever be called upon to do. Which raises the possibility: Maybe this civilization of liberty we defend does not belong to us, but to all humanity.

When you hear it asked whether Iraqis will fight for their own freedom, ask yourself whether it is possible to fight harder than Mithal al-Alusi has fought. Is it really too much to ask Americans to recognize how much they share with a man like this? Is it too much to expect that those who describe themselves as "liberals" refrain from mocking individuals who risk so much for the sake of liberty? **NR**

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■ PUBLIC POLICY II

Myths About Social Security

And the dispelling truth

ALAN REYNOLDS

WHEN it comes to Social Security, Robert Bixby of the Concord Coalition sees too little choice between do-nothing Democrats and free-lunch Republicans. Bixby has a point: If all the future taxpayer-financed benefits promised to millions of aging baby boomers could actually be paid for with impunity, as some Republicans suggest, then do-nothing Democrats could point to such claims to suggest that there are no problems worth fixing. But there are, in fact, big problems with Social Security, and the media continue to misrepresent them.

The unfixable part of the problem is demographic. The population aged 65 or older will increase from 37 million today to 75 million in 2035, when their average life expectancy will be 85. Because future beneficiaries will live longer, they will receive more benefits over their lifetimes. Meanwhile, the number of younger workers who pay for these retirees will barely rise. Economists Jagadeesh Gokhale and Kent Smetters note that today, "there are almost five people of working age (between 20 and 64) for each retiree age 65 and over. By 2030, the number of working-age people per retiree will decline to less than three; by 2080, the ratio will decline to about two." Any burden shared by half as many taxpayers must, as a matter of simple arithmetic, become twice as heavy.

This demographic time bomb has been compounded by an arbitrary "wage indexing" formula. The level of benefits when people first start collecting Social Security happened, in the late 1970s, to be indexed to average growth of real wages rather than simply adjusted for inflation (as many experts proposed). As a result, benefits for new retirees become more generous by about 1 percent each year in real terms, which adds up fast. "The purchasing power of the average earner's benefits at retirement is expected to nearly double between now and 2075," notes the Congressional Budget Office, with the result that "45 percent of the rise in spending is due to a projected increase in the real value of Social Security benefit checks." As long as initial benefits are indexed the way they are, faster economic growth will not help much—because it would result in faster wage growth and therefore larger Social Security benefits.

The reason future taxpayers cannot and will not pay rising real benefits to twice as many seniors is basic economics. Nobel laureate Edward Prescott found that lower income, payroll, and sales taxes fully explain why Americans work so much harder and longer than Europeans. In economic jargon, lifetime work effort is highly "elastic" (responsive) with respect to tax rates. "The large labor-supply elasticity," Prescott concludes, "means that as populations age, promises of payments to the current and future old *cannot* be financed by increasing tax rates. These promises can be honored by *reducing* the effective marginal tax rate on labor and moving toward [different] retirement systems. . . . Requiring people to save for their retirement years [in personal accounts] is not a tax and does not reduce labor supply."

Mr. Reynolds is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute.

A SYSTEM AND ITS CANARDS

The Social Security problem, in short, is that attempting to provide rising real benefits to millions more seniors would require debilitating taxes on future workers—thus discouraging work, slowing the economy, and exacerbating the fiscal dilemma. That is why Prescott insists this problem "cannot" be fixed with higher taxes: The threat of higher taxes is the Social Security problem. While keeping the essence of this problem in mind, let's examine a few erroneous suggestions that have been made about what to do about it.

One: "The system" must be saved. If balancing the books were all that mattered, this could easily be accomplished by, say, raising the Social Security retirement age to 100. What really matters is making more choices and opportunities available to younger people to help them plan for the fact that their "human capital" eventually wears out and will need to be augmented with some financial capital. Giving them the opportunity to divert—voluntarily—part of their payroll tax to a personal account is crucial.

Those who propose to "reform" Social Security without adding choice and ownership are actually just proposing various ways of saddling young people with higher taxes and lower benefits. For example, Peter Diamond and Peter Orszag in their book *Saving Social Security* rely on increased taxes on higher earners for 42 percent of their hoped-for reduction in unfunded debt—yet benefits to the top 15 percent would also be cut by a third. The other half of their savings comes from "a universal legacy charge on future workers and beneficiaries, roughly half in the form of benefit reductions for all beneficiaries becoming eligible in or after 2023, and the rest in the form of . . . increases in the payroll tax from 2023 onward." "Onward" means forever: a tax increase every year. Taxpayers would pay more and more for their benefit reductions.

Peter Wehner, President Bush's director of strategic initiatives, issued a memo saying, "If the goal is permanent solvency and sustainability . . . then [Personal Retirement Accounts], for all their virtues, are insufficient to that task." Wehner's emphasis was inverted. Young people do not need PRAs because such accounts solve Social Security's financing problem; they need PRAs because all solutions to Social Security's financing problem reveal that young people dare not rely on it for any substantial portion of their financial needs in old age.

Two: Social Security isn't bankrupt. The president uses the term "bankrupt" to describe Social Security's future; his critics respond by saying there is no immediate "crisis." But these are quite different concepts. When giant corporations go bankrupt, that does not mean they have no income or assets; it means they don't have enough income to pay their bills. So it will be with

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Social Security sometime after 2042, unless commitments are brought into line with resources. The trust fund is not a pile of cash. It is just a bookkeeping gimmick in which one part of the government promises money to another part of the government. That "fund" will not make it even one dollar easier to pay future benefits. Although Social Security is thereby authorized to pay benefits for 24 years after benefits begin to exceed Social Security receipts (in 2018), doing so would require adding some $200 billion to every budget deficit by 2027, and more thereafter.

Three: Transition costs would be prohibitive. Critics of partial privatization claim it would cost a trillion dollars or more to set up such accounts and that diverting taxes to such accounts would make Social Security less solvent. Both statements are based on an illusion, resulting from the government's backward-looking accounting. Gokhale and Smetters ask us to suppose that Mr. Smith is allowed to carve out $1 from his Social Security tax and deposit that $1 in a personal account. In exchange, Mr. Smith accepts an actuarially fair $1 reduction in his future Social Security benefits. Bookkeeping aside, this transaction would have zero net effect on the fiscal imbalances of either Social Security or the rest of the government. Social Security's unfunded debt would not change in the slightest, nor would the overall long-term government budget.

Four: It would be fiscally wise to raise the cap on earnings subjected to Social Security taxes. There has been considerable Washington chatter about lifting this earnings cap from the current $90,000 to $140,000. If this happens, the maximum yearly tax would jump from $11,160 to $17,360. Under current rules, however, paying larger taxes would entitle taxpayers to larger benefits, leaving little net effect on Social Security's solvency. This scheme also looks like a slippery first step toward eliminating the cap altogether, as happened with Medicare. Only 6 percent of Americans have salaries above $90,000, so soaking the rich would not raise much revenue; yet adding this tax hike would push the overall burden on professionals and entrepreneurs above the highest tax rates in Europe, with devastating economic effects. This terrible idea is being peddled to Republicans as a compromise. But there is a difference between compromising and being compromised. For me, this is a deal-breaker.

Five: We can simply "refinance" un-financed promises. Some supporters of a specific proposal by Rep. Paul Ryan and Sen. John Sununu say the entire $12 trillion unfunded debt would be no problem if we simply "refinanced" it. But you can't refinance something that was never financed in the first place—which is what "unfunded" means. The main problem with unfunded future Social Security promises is that they imply a horrific tax burden after 2030 or so. Trying to pay those bills by issuing debt would not fix that problem. On the contrary, it would convert a formidable threat of horrific future taxes into an absolute certainty, because future taxpayers would then be obligated to repay the extra debt or pay interest on it. To lock in a huge real increase in benefits, thus committing future taxpayers, is not "refinancing"; it is a recipe for disaster.

Six: Chile's privatized retirement system doesn't work. Larry Rohter of the *New York Times* recently concocted a story about "the bitter legacy" of Chile's privatized pensions. "For all the program's success in economic terms," he wrote, "the government continues to direct billions of dollars to a safety net for those whose contributions were not large enough to ensure even a minimum pension approaching $140 a month. Many others, because they earned much of their income in the underground economy . . . or work only seasonally, remain outside the system altogether."

Chile's guaranteed minimum pension, roughly similar to our SSI program, costs $70 million a year—not billions, as Rohter would have it. And Americans who work seasonally or in the underground economy are "outside" our Social Security system too, but Chile's underground economy actually shrank with privatization. The worst case Rohter could find was a man who "earns just under $950 a month . . . [but] his nearly 24 years of contributions will finance a 20-year annuity paying only $315 a month." This Chilean's inflation-protected annuity will replace a third of his final salary after fewer than 24 years, whereas our Social Security now replaces only 28 percent of higher salaries after 35 years and will be unable to replace 30 percent of middling salaries after 2042.

Except for those with low *lifetime* earnings, Social Security is a very bad deal indeed.

Rohter also writes that "critics respond that the privatized system has been less successful in ensuring a dignified retirement for the elderly." Less successful than what? The Chilean economy was a basket case before privatization and an "economic miracle" ever since. The average payroll tax on Chilean firms fell from 30 percent to 5 percent in six years, according to Jonathan Gruber of MIT, and annual economic growth jumped from about 3 percent to 7 percent a year.

Seven: Social Security is, for most people, a good deal. "For workers with low lifetime household earnings," says the CBO, "total Social Security benefits received over a lifetime exceed dedicated taxes paid over a lifetime, on average. The opposite is true for workers with average and above-average earnings." Except for those with low *lifetime* earnings (which often means working the fewest years rather than working at lower pay), Social Security is a very bad deal indeed. At the end of last year, the average monthly retirement benefit was $911 a month and the *maximum* benefit was only twice that amount. Two million aged people who never paid enough Social Security tax to qualify were collecting $428 a month from the Supplemental Security Income program. In other words, if you paid the maximum Social Security tax for 40 years or more, your benefit will be only about four times larger than if you never paid a dime.

Between all the misconceptions and the outright disinformation, reforming Social Security will be an uphill fight. But future workers and retirees deserve our best effort to stay focused on the facts. **NR**

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the long view

ROB LONG

Psychiatrists' Notes From All Over . . .

Groupe Psychiatrique
12, rue Jacob
Paris 75006

22 February 2005

Le patient arrives several minutes late, in an agitated state. Quite tense, displaying a great deal of self-directed anger, and, later, doctor-directed impatience when reminded that his session is almost over. (*Le patient* expresses some mild irritation that the professional hour, once 55 minutes, has been reduced by law to 35 minutes. When it is explained to him that a shorter professional hour means that more psychiatrists will be able to work, he snorts in derision.)

After a glass of wine, *le patient* calms down a bit.

Le patient explains that in his capacity as *Le Président de la République*, he must occasionally eat what he refers to as *le sandwich de merde*. This he has done, he claims, by dining in Brussels with President Bush of the United States. It went well, of course, but *le patient* cannot help but reflect on the absurdity of the situation, the sadness of life itself, and the bitter hypocrisy of making pleasant conversation with a man he despises and scorns, just because, in the words of *le patient*, "*la situation en Irak n'est pas une grande tragédie, comme on veut.*"

I ask *le patient* to clarify his statement: He indicated that he would have preferred a messy outcome in Iraq, a botched election, a tenfold increase in casualties? Is this a correct interpretation of his wishes? *Le patient* shrugs and lights a cigarette. It is important, he reminds me, to understand that the *texte* of his remarks can also be understood to have a *texte secondaire*, in which it is not that he wishes for violence and heavy casualties and humiliation for the Americans, but, rather, "violence," and "heavy casualties," and "humiliation" for them, as concepts—as metaphor, one might say. I nod and compliment *le patient* on his subtle and sophisticated reasoning.

At the same time, *le patient* is depressed. He feels that the newspaper and television images of the dinner with *le président Bush* seem to display a fawning, almost subservient posture for *Le Président de la République de France*, somewhat ill-suited to the leader of a great and (semiotically) powerful nation. This stature *débâcle* makes him melancholy, and it seems to pierce his healthy French *amour-propre*. How can a man of such subtle intellect and acuity of perception, such historical understanding and practical intelligence, be—or, worse, appear to be—a simpering, apologizing, braying cretin next to . . . to . . . *that* man? It is worse than ironic. It is worse than illogical. It is an almost unbearable injustice.

Le patient sips his wine. The evening shadows lengthen. Downstairs, we can hear the concierge calling to her husband—lame in the right leg since the war—that his chicken is ready. We smile sadly to each other and shrug. We hear the husband shuffling along the paving stones, his right foot dragging mournfully behind him. I say to *le patient*: What can one do with such a world? How can one ever rise above the muck? One cannot, he says to me. One cannot. But still, one must try. I shrug, nod, have a sip of wine, nod, shrug, and sip and shrug and shrug again.

Le patient is correct: Life is a tragic/comic dance. And the bitter irony cannot but seem absurd to a Frenchman. After a small wedge of a decent Reblochon, and another glass of wine, the patient begins to reflect more philosophically about his situation. Perhaps, he says, this experience is, in a way, a victory—an intellectual victory of a sort. Perhaps it will be seen, in the fullness of history, as a small moment of clarity in an otherwise murky time. Perhaps, he suggests, he really is a great man, a historical figure, who will be recognized only in later days. "Perhaps," I say to him with a shrug, "although it isn't really playing that way in the media."

Le patient expresses irritation that his *psychiatre* isn't more *sympa*. I shrug again. I am dedicated to the truth, I tell him. The truth is my mistress. Well, not *vraiment*. My actual mistress lives on the rue St Dominique, in the Seventh. I was speaking metaphorically. *Le patient* asks me to shut up.

We sit in silence for a moment, smoking. And then, in delicious irony, our time is up.

Gathering his scarf and cigarettes, he exits into the winter night. I finish my wine, and walk to my lover's apartment. Later, I dine with my wife.

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HELP!!!!

They're Off!

Mrs. Clinton polls 40 percent.
At 28, Kerry's a drag.
Stuck at 17, Edwards recedes—
Pretty much of a no-money nag.
In the stands, white males (40 percent)
Harbor negative thoughts about Hill.
Dr. Dean, who prescribes to the Dems,
Pushes uppers. They work. You get shrill.

—W. H. von Dreele

POLITICALLY CORRECT By Jim Huber
SOMEONE MUST REALLY LOVE ME
AWWWW. IS THAT A VALENTINE CARD?
EVEN BETTER!
—NEWS— DEAN NAMED DNC CHAIRMAN
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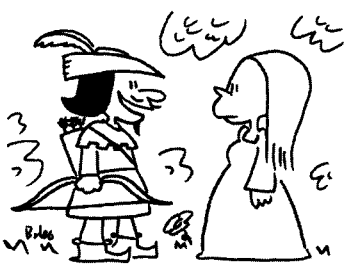
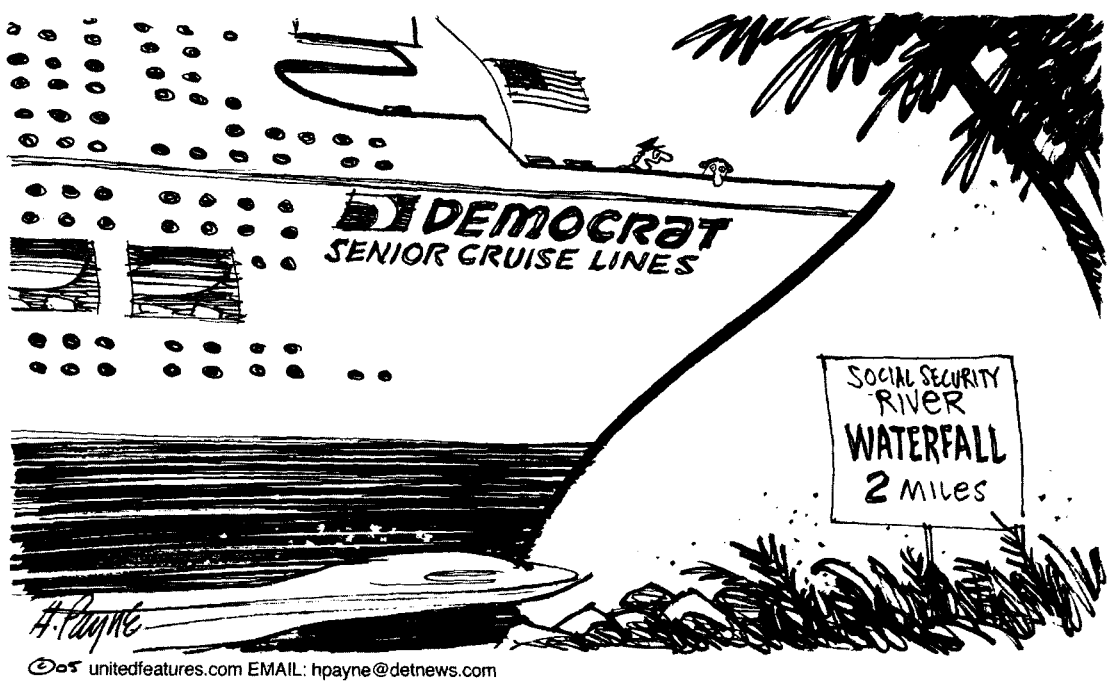


". . . and then Prince John flip-flopped on the middle-class tax cut, and the rest is history."



"NO PROBLEM! WE'LL WORRY ABOUT IT WHEN WE GET THERE."

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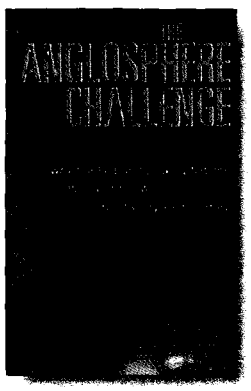
Sphere of Influence?



The Anglosphere Challenge: Why the English-Speaking Nations Will Lead the Way in the Twenty-First Century, by James C. Bennett (Rowman & Littlefield, 352 pp., $39.95)

KEITH WINDSCHUTTLE

As soon as most people hear the word "Anglosphere," they have a fairly good idea what it means; this is a considerable achievement for any author developing a new term. By taking up and promoting the word, James C. Bennett has sharply identified an increasingly visible historical development. Whatever else Bennett's new book accomplishes, it will put the movement it describes firmly into the public consciousness. For that reason alone, this is a momentous work.

Bennett's thesis is enormously ambitious. It is a prediction about the future shape of the world's security alliances, cultural affiliations, economic progress, and technological development. It provides a political justification for the world it envisions, and offers policy guidelines for how to bring it about. But unlike most of the grand blueprints of the past that have sought to redefine the world, Bennett's is conspicuously anti-utopian and, indeed, decidedly conservative.

The Anglosphere he envisages would be a "network commonwealth" of English-speaking nations based on the existing shared values of Anglo-American cultural and political traditions. His concept offers the prospect not of radical change but of a reaffirmation of deep cultural roots. Politically, it is diametrically opposed to the two major movements that, since the demise of socialism, have absorbed the Western intellectual Left: radical multiculturalism at home and bureaucratic internationalism abroad.

At a time when the United States, England, and other English-speaking countries are absorbed with the awful, bloody business of the War on Terror, Bennett has arrived to put a mercifully positive item onto the contemporary agenda.

The idea that Bennett is advocating has been around for some time. In *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996), Samuel Huntington wrote of the possibility of a "civilizational" alliance of English-speaking nations. In 1999, Robert Conquest raised the prospect of a mutual association of English-speaking states as a counter to the growing centralism of the European Union. Historian Paul Johnson provocatively suggested that, since Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were such natural partners of the U.S., they should become states of the union. Last year, Johnson argued that, by the end of George W. Bush's second term, economic growth and population change would create a triumvirate of three great power groups: India, China, and the English-speaking world. Declining population and productivity would leave continental Europe, including Russia, marginalized.

Bennett has been making his case for the Anglosphere in numerous publications, and in a weekly column, *The Anglosphere Beat*, that he wrote for UPI for three years. In his book, he argues that this is an especially propitious moment for the Anglosphere. The major existing sources of international association are in deep trouble. The palpable failure of the United Nations to act on the crises in Kosovo, Iraq, and Sudan has largely sidelined it as an international force. Even in its purported specialty of humanitarian aid, the U.N.'s attempt to coordinate relief efforts after the December 26 tsunami was conspicuously ignored in the worst affected areas of Indonesia, where the real job was done independently by American and Australian naval and military forces.

At the same time, a growing political sentiment has emerged in Britain against further integration with Europe. Since 1999, when the Euroskepticism of the Tory party gave it a decisive victory over Labour in elections to the European Parliament, monetary union and the euro have become increasingly unpopular in Britain. Many British now realize that, once adopted, the euro would become very difficult to scrap; it would irreversibly commit the U.K. to the European system. Faced with taking an irretrievable step into a continent plagued by low economic growth, rising welfare dependency, and demographic decline, Britain no longer sees its entry into the European Monetary Union as inevitable. Doubts are rising even about the once apparently settled issue of political union.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., the past decade has seen a historic reappraisal of American cultural roots: a recognition of the Britishness of American culture, and of the profound extent to which the British colonial period still influences American customs and assumptions. Last year, Huntington's book *Who Are We?* argued against the long-standing "melting pot" or cultural-pluralism model of American identity, which holds that individuals of all nations were transformed in America into a new race. Instead, Huntington argued for the preeminence of the original Anglo-Protestant cultural identity. Each wave of immigrants to the U.S. entered a society where Anglo-Protestant values prevailed; each generation quickly conformed to these values, thus swelling the numbers of those to be encountered by succeeding generations. Huntington

Mr. Windschuttle is the author of *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists Are Murdering Our Past.*

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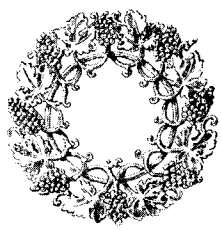
argued that this model accurately described the cultural absorption of all immigrants until the 1960s.

Bennett has constructed his own thesis of the Anglosphere out of this Anglo-Protestant historical inheritance. "It is our core values and characteristics that have made us dynamic," he writes, "and it is to those values that we must return": individualism, rule of law, the honoring of covenants, and an emphasis on freedom. The core of Bennett's Anglosphere comprises the countries where these values are dominant: the U.S., the U.K., Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, English-speaking Canada, and the English-speaking Caribbean. He also includes the educated English-speaking populations of South Africa and India as important "nodes." He describes some other former colonies, including Zimbabwe and the Philippines, as outside the inner circle but still closer to the center than to the periphery.



Bennett wants to distinguish the Anglosphere from other models of international alliance that he believes have outlived their usefulness. The principal one is the concept of "the West": the European-descended countries that constituted Western civilization. The widening gulf between continental Europe and the U.S. shows that the concept of the West is already anachronistic. It was artificially prolonged anyway, Bennett argues, by the need for an identity to tie NATO together during the Cold War. In the post-Soviet era, there is nothing to inhibit the development of a separate identity for the English-descended civilizations.

He also rejects the model of World War II's "special relationship" between the U.S. and Britain. A number of conservatives skeptical about his ideas have used the example of the 1956 Suez crisis, when the Eisenhower administration curtailed British intervention in Egypt, to show that nation-states have their own interests that sometimes do not coincide. Bennett agrees that "special relationships" might not endure, but he argues that he is not talking about short-term national interests and conflicts: His Anglosphere would not be a traditional treaty alliance based on geopolitical strategy or the sharing of a common enemy. Instead, Bennett sees the Anglosphere as a long-term civilizational relationship, more between the citizens of its various nations than between their governments.

His "network commonwealth" would be a series of links to promote the flow of informational products, software, and people, bypassing the gatekeeper institutions of the past. The main policy mechanisms to do this are the familiar ones of security alliances and trade and immigration agreements. Bennett emphasizes, however, that the network commonwealth cannot emulate the nation-state. Indeed, it is not a state at all, though it could potentially fulfill some of the traditional economic functions of the state. It is a means of linking smaller political communities so that they can deal with common concerns and take up common opportunities.

This network would be maintained largely through the Internet. So central to his thesis are the latest electronic communication systems that Bennett devotes his first chapter not to the Anglosphere itself but to the social and political implications of recent technological developments. He argues that technology has brought us to the verge of great breakthroughs: "The Internet and informational technologies will soon change the way the basic goods of everyday life are produced and sold, how we will all make our livings, and how these changes affect the abilities of government." And the cultural environment needed to make the most of these changes is not something new but one built upon traditional Anglo-American values.

Bennett is aware that critics are likely to misinterpret his proposals as an attempt to breathe life into old imperialist ideas about the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon race. Far from it, he says: The Anglosphere is a cultural union that has nothing to do with race. "It recognizes that the English language and cultures derived from our common Anglosphere values are today borne by people of all races and origins." Moreover, there is another similar cultural regime emerging in what Bennett calls the Hispanosphere, which is similarly composed of peoples from many races and origins.

Bennett knows that what he envisages cannot be created by government social engineering. It has to arise as a cultural phenomenon among those individuals who would benefit most from it. The people who constitute the Anglosphere simply need to recognize its existence and begin articulating what they already understand instinctively: They have more in common among themselves than with people of other cultures.

Nonetheless, he does have a small number of policy recommendations for national governments. He wants immigration regulations to recognize a new category of "sojourner" to make it easier for people to work in one country and return home frequently. This would eventually result, he hopes, in a reciprocal set of agreements permitting the free movement of peoples throughout the Anglosphere. He also wants a substantial extension of international free-trade agreements: If made among the core English-speaking countries alone, they would create a common market 50 percent greater than the U.S. itself.

This Anglosphere concept, Bennett contends, also has the potential to redefine American alliances in the post-Cold War era: Given that Europe's NATO members, with the sole exception of Britain, have let military spending lapse to the point where their armed forces are technologically incapable of operating side by side with Americans in a serious conflict, it is time to build coalitions for the future in the form of permanent security alliances within the Anglosphere. Bennett notes that three coalition powers—the U.S., Britain, and Australia—are geographically situated to provide near-global security coverage.

Bennett has been working on this thesis long enough to be able to counter most of its critics. He is extremely well read in British and American history and his case is everywhere based on the most recent and impressive scholarship. Over the past decade, the trend of this scholarship has both shaped and confirmed his views. In book form, the Anglosphere thesis amounts to a formidable piece of work. Its single biggest test hinges on whether Britain fully commits itself to Europe. If it does, his drama will lose its central character and thus most of its appeal. Perhaps the major value of Bennett's book lies in the convincing case it makes for Britain's adhesion to the Anglosphere. Given the most recent U.N. demographic

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predictions for Europe—a 13 percent population decline by 2050, matched by an aging of the population that will subtract an extra 8 percent of GDP for health and welfare costs—the EU's economic attractions are swiftly waning. On the other hand, the U.S. and Australia—with respective population growths over the same period of 36 and 27 percent—should remain economic powerhouses. Add to this the cultural connection with India, which by 2050 will pass China to become the world's most populous nation (1.5 billion), and the prospect of an Anglosphere looks far more promising than being tied to Europe.

Success depends on whether an Anglosphere can offer its potential members some tangible short-term benefits as well as long-term promise. To date, however, the short-term gains have been thin on the ground. Some of Bennett's prescriptions have been realized, but in ways that appear to undercut his cultural optimism. Last year, for example, the U.S. signed a free-trade agreement with Australia. Unfortunately, because the agreement was popular in Australia and Prime Minister John Howard wanted it delivered before the October 2004 election, U.S. negotiators knew they could drive a much harder bargain—so they put the interests of their domestic farming constituencies ahead of those of a loyal military ally with close cultural connections.

In book form, the Anglosphere thesis amounts to a formidable piece of work. Its single biggest test hinges on whether Britain fully commits itself to Europe.

There has also been some action taken in line with Bennett's call for freer global movement of people. The U.S. now waives its entry-visa requirement for short-term visitors from some 27 countries. But while the British, Australians, and New Zealanders can all take advantage of this, so can the citizens of 24 other, mainly European, countries. Hence, there is nothing about it peculiar to the Anglosphere. Further liberalization along these lines is more likely to be determined by issues of compliance and security than by cultural connection or English-language ability.

Thus, even in trade and immigration—the areas most open to potential reform in Bennett's direction—the Anglosphere nations are unlikely any time soon to put cultural, linguistic, or sentimental connections ahead of narrower foreign-policy interests. This provides some further reasons for skepticism about how quickly and how extensively an Anglosphere could become a political reality. Far from being obsolete as Bennett suggests, the nation-state remains the bedrock of global political organization. While the Left still pins its hopes on transcending nations through organizations like the EU, and Bennett thinks nations will gradually be replaced by communications networks, there remains no other plausible way to organize an acceptable constitutional and legal system: Democratic politics, the liberal constitution, and civil society all depend upon the nation-state. The undemocratic bureaucratic centralism that dominates the EU is a clear demonstration of the lack of an acceptable institutional alternative.

Bennett is also wrong to suggest that the notion of "the West" is obsolete. The West was not simply an artifice created in 1946 to counter the USSR. Far from being an imagined community, Western civilization is an ancient historical reality that still exerts a profound cultural influence. While Bennett is right to stress Britain's tradition of political freedom, he downplays what the heirs of Western civilization have in common. The very way Westerners think about the human condition—through the intellectual disciplines of philosophy and history—derives from ancient Greece. All of modern European culture, including that of the Anglos, is utterly dependent on the Greco-Roman cultural inheritance.

This suggests that the prevailing differences between continental Europe and the Anglosphere are unlikely to be so deep as to be immutable. In fact, it is most probable that the bureaucratic centralism to which Europe is now committed will not be permanent. Rather than fulfill the current predictions of their economic and demographic demise, at least some of the nations of Europe are likely to wake up and stage the kind of free-market economic turnaround enjoyed by Britain and the U.S. in the 1980s.

One further problem with Bennett's thesis is his rather excessive faith in technological change. Bennett's day job involves him in futuristic high-tech industries. He knows a great deal about their potential and is bound to generate enthusiasm among people of a like mind; the rest of us, however, are likely to remain cool until we see the results in practice. In the last ten years we have all gone through the Internet revolution, which has radically affected almost every industry and profession. Yet at the same time, we have been subject to so much speculation that has turned out to be empty or mistaken—the paperless office, self-replicating robots, all the overblown claims made during the dot-com boom—that most of us will believe it only when we see it. A network commonwealth with the kind of political impact Bennett envisages may well be a viable proposition, but it has yet to prove itself so.

Plenty of networks of the kind he envisages have spontaneously emerged in the professions, science, and academia. There is no doubt that at least some of Bennett's technological determinism is warranted. But the political consequences he predicts are chancier: An Anglosphere is one prospect, certainly, but it is also possible that technological change will affect a far broader international spectrum, with English as the lingua franca but extending to most of the world's developed countries and dragging into the same orbit some of the underdeveloped ones as well.

Whatever the outcome, *The Anglosphere Challenge* is one of the important books of our time. It establishes the centrality of British culture to the economic, technological, and political prospects of the world. The ancient traditions of the British—individual rights and responsibilities, minimal government, and a strong civil society—constitute the most reliable formula for a future that works. Even if that future turns out to be less confined to countries of British descent than Bennett predicts, it is highly likely still to be dominated by their cultural values and traditions. **NR**

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Undismal Scientist

John Kenneth Galbraith: His Life, His Politics, His Economics, by Richard Parker (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 832 pp., $35)

ROSS DOUTHAT

Midway through this doorstop of a biography, the narrative is interrupted by a raft of photographs. There is John Kenneth Galbraith stooping—always stooping, as if his great beak of a nose were dragging him down from Olympian heights to a more mortal level—to speak with Jackie Kennedy and JFK; with Jawaharlal Nehru and George McGovern; with Jimmy Carter and Julia Child; with Bill and Hillary Clinton. The world has changed, these photographs seem to suggest, but Galbraith has been a hawk-nosed constant, casting a lengthy patrician shadow over the decades-long waning of the American liberal establishment.

Except that Galbraith is not really a patrician, by birth or breeding. Raised a Scottish-Canadian farmboy in rural Ontario, he spent his undergraduate years at an obscure agricultural college and found his way into the New Deal brain trust and the Ivy League half by accident. And the strangeness of this fate, in which his older identity as a rural nobody was subsumed into a variety of unexpected roles—bestselling public intellectual, ambassador to India, confidant to presidents and presidential candidates—would seem to have the makings of an acute and distinctly American psychological drama, rich in mystery and contradiction.

Unfortunately, though Richard Parker's biography runs for over 800 pages, it's only in the photographs that the contradictions, public and private, of Galbraith's unusual life come into focus. What Parker has given us, as his title suggests, is an intellectual biography, not an intimate portrait: Galbraith's relationship with his wife and children, his famous friendships (with this magazine's founder, among others), and his affinity for celebrity and power are all touched on but rarely analyzed. Parker is more interested in his subject's books and times, you might say, than his life and times, and while the books are interesting and the times fascinating, there is an absence at the center of the biography, a place where Galbraith withdraws from his biographer's gaze, or where Parker fears to tread.

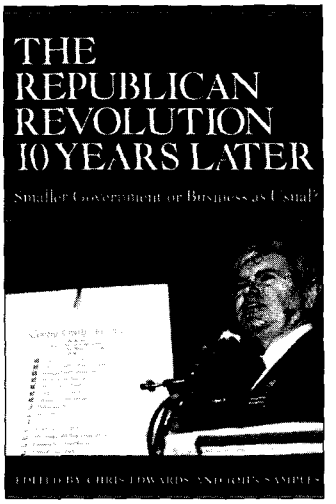
Instead of intimacy, Parker favors broad sweeps and wide canvases, in which Galbraith's life opens out into the story of the American century, and particularly the nation's various political and ideological conflicts. This approach has its advantages: Parker writes cleanly and fluidly, and his subject—an idiosyncratic Keynesian who became FDR's price czar, worked for Henry Luce's *Fortune*, took part in the Strategic Bombing Survey, wrote speeches for Adlai Stevenson in the early 1950s and bestselling books throughout that decade—is no bad protagonist to follow through the tumult of mid-century America.

Even when Galbraith found himself far from the action—as ambassador to India, for instance, during the height of the Kennedy-Khrushchev staredown—Parker has an opportunity to shed some light into the era's obscurer corners. So we watch the Cuban missile crisis both from the Kennedy White House and from the vantage point of the Indian subcontinent, where Galbraith was forced to improvise an American diplomatic strategy to cope with the outbreak of the Sino-Indian War—a fascinating and almost-forgotten moment in Cold War history.

The book's intellectual narrative is less engaging, unfortunately, though this isn't entirely Parker's fault. Like any biographer of a talented writer, he's forced to offer brief and workmanlike summaries of famous books like *The Affluent Society*, which feel particularly plodding when contrasted with the often-sparkling excerpts of Galbraith's own prose that dot the biography's pages. And while Parker has taken as a subject one of the last economists who wrote for a general audience, a reader who lacks an abiding interest in economic theory is likely to find his eyes

Mr. Douthat is an *Atlantic* reporter-researcher and the author of *Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class*, forthcoming from Hyperion Books.

The Era of Big Government Is Not Over



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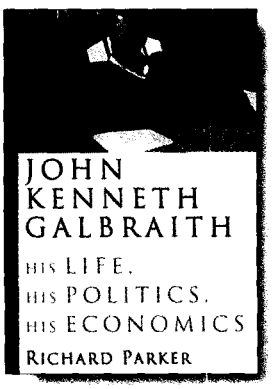
glazing over at times, amid detailed explanations of yet another slight Galbraithian revision of Keynesian theory.

That is, if he hasn't thrown the book away in annoyance, as some conservative readers will be tempted to do. Like many biographers, Parker is a partisan of his subject, and much of the book feels like a vindication, rather than a description, of Galbraith's work and arguments. In debate after debate, controversy after controversy, Parker insists or at least strongly implies that Galbraith was right and almost everyone else wrong. Sometimes this is persuasive (as in Galbraith's insistence that the Strategic Bombing Survey pointed to the limits of air power) and sometimes it is at least plausible (as in Galbraith's early proclamations of the folly of Vietnam). But even a sympathetic biographer ought to be willing to turn a skeptical eye on, say, Galbraith's early-1970s call for the U.S. to nationalize most of the country's largest corporations, after buying out their stockholders with government bonds.



Much of this partisanship could be forgiven, and perhaps even preferred to a tedious "on-one-hand, on-the-other-hand" attempt at perfect fairness. But Parker's account of Galbraith-as-hero creates a broader weakness in the book's narrative. Galbraith's career crested, intellectually and politically, with 1960s American liberalism, and then waned with it as well, so that the entire second half of the biography is a falling action, a decline into the political wilderness. Because the book is a vindication, not an elegy, Galbraith is inevitably cast as a Cassandra, prophesying to a deaf-eared country that inevitable doom will follow from the policies of an increasingly ascendant GOP. And because the book is a vindication, not an elegy, such predictions of doom are presented as almost invariably coming true.

So the failures of liberal, quasi-Galbraithian policies—the excesses of the Great Society, for instance, and the neoconservative critique of the same—are passed over largely in silence. (Parker focuses instead on Galbraith's Johnson-era anti-war activism.) And passed over, too, are many of the real economic achievements of the Reagan-Clinton-Bush decades. The Reagan boom is treated as a scandal-ridden blip in a decade of economic misery, and even the roaring Nineties are presented as a time when Americans were distracted by the Lewinsky affair from the reality of "global poverty, corporate crime, and income inequality."

This position can be defended, of course, but its defenders are primarily elements of the unreconstructed Left, who share Galbraith's shopworn socialisms, as well as his late-in-life conclusion that the Republican party has risen to power primarily by exploiting the innate selfishness of the typical middle-class American. Such partisans will find much encouragement in Parker's book, which has a hint of a call-to-arms about it. The epigraph, from Max Weber, informs readers that "we shall not succeed in banishing what besets us—the sense that we were born too late for a great political era—unless we understand how to become the forerunner of a greater one."

Heeding such an anachronistic trumpet would be a great mistake: Unhappy left-wingers casting about for a hero could do far better than John Kenneth Galbraith. But they could also do far worse, and conservatives frustrated by Parker's frequent lurches into leftist hagiography would do well to remember that there is also much to admire in Galbraith—the grace and dignity (sadly lacking in so many of today's bomb-throwers, Right and Left) with which he has carried himself as a public intellectual, but also the questions he raised about American life, and particularly about the purpose of our vast prosperity.

Having created the affluent society, Galbraith always asked, what kind of society do we wish it to be? Having embraced the free market, how can we make it serve an end greater than itself? One need not agree with his answers to feel grateful that he was willing to ask the questions—questions that in this age of conservative ascendancy are well worth asking again. **NR**

■ SHELF LIFE ■

Kenner in Bloom

MICHAEL POTEMRA

When Hugh Kenner died in 2003, the English-speaking world lost a master stylist, one of its best literary critics; National Review lost a longtime friend and contributor. Dalkey Archive has just released a new paperback edition of his 1962 masterpiece, ***Flaubert, Joyce and Beckett: The Stoic Comedians*** (107 pp., $12.50). Kenner makes characteristically worthwhile observations about all three writers, and his prose is a delight.

The following, from his discussion of Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, is a good example not just of Kenner's style but also of his wide-ranging intellect: "Before encyclopaedias were invented, facts had to be invented, the very concept of a fact: fact as the atom of experience, for the encyclopaedist to set in its alphabetical place, in dramatic testimony to the realization that no one knows in what other place to set it, or under what circumstances it may be wanted again. The [dictionary] does not find the word 'fact' used in this way before 1632. Before then, a fact was a thing done, factum, part of a continuum of deed and gesture." The bourgeois-intellectual heroes of Flaubert's wonderful satire thus provide, Kenner demonstrates, an epitome of history: "Having commenced, like the first men, tilling the fields, they were to end like the last men, making Encyclopaedias: inheriting, so, the new heaven and the new earth of the Enlightenment."

Joyce, too, he considers an avatar of the modern, because Joyce's stories are in their essence creatures of the printed

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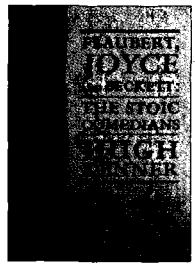
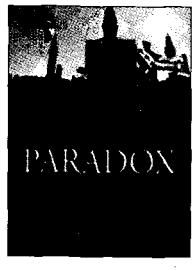
page; the spoken-word echoes of traditional literature have been replaced by a text that its author views very self-consciously *as* a text: "Joyce is acutely aware that the modern Homer must deal with neither an oral culture nor a manuscript one, but with a culture whose shape and whose attitude to its daily experience is determined by the omnipresence of the printed book. He was very careful, therefore, to reproduce in his [writing] the very quality of print, its reduction of language to a finite number of interchangeable and permutable parts."



One of my own favorite moments in *Ulysses* is when Leopold Bloom's cat meows—and Joyce reports to us *precisely* what the cat said: "Mrkgnao!" Kenner explains why this is so effective and captivating: "Let an intelligible sound which the dictionary has omitted to register be transcribed according to approved phonetic rules, and the result is taut, arbitrary, and grotesque: something living has been imperfectly synthesized out of those twenty-six interchangeable parts to which every nuance of human discourse can allegedly be reduced: as though technology were offering to reproduce Helen of Troy with an Erector set."

Kenner is equally incisive on Samuel Beckett, characterizing him in swift strokes as "the non-maestro, the anti-virtuoso, habitue of non-form and anti-matter, Euclid of the dark zone where all signs are negative, the comedian of utter disaster." Beckett's approach to writing novels, Kenner reports, is "subtracting from the methods of *Ulysses* all the irreducible realities of Joyce's Dublin, and so transposing the novel to a plane of empty but oddly gripping construction."



To read this brief, joyful book is to experience a great mind at work—and, finally, to rediscover hope for the future of literature. The "dead end" of Beckett, Kenner assures us, may prove a fecund beginning.

■ In the thought-provoking book ***The Islamic Paradox: Shiite Clerics, Sunni Fundamentalists, and the Coming of Arab Democracy*** (AEI, 65 pp., $15), American Enterprise Institute fellow Reuel Marc Gerecht argues that it's not secular moderates but believing traditionalist Muslims who will be central to the effort to democratize the Arab world. Iraq's Ayatollah Sistani, for example, issued a fatwa endorsing democracy; the Shiite leader's directive was, writes Gerecht, "in its essentials . . . flawlessly secular, clearly and concisely asserting the people as the final political arbiter."

Gerecht contends that the bin Laden movement must be defeated "from the inside out": "The liberal and neoconservative hope that Muslim moderates or liberal secularists can compete with and vanquish mainstream fundamentalism, which ultimately is the wellhead for bin Ladenism, in a Western context, is to imagine Thomas Jefferson without Martin Luther." Or try to imagine the collapse of the Soviet Union without a Gorbachev figure: a convinced Communist dictator who started the reform process, with amazing consequences.

The U.S., writes Gerecht, "has no alternative to switching its allegiances from the rulers to the ruled [in the Muslim world]. . . . In doing so, we will undoubtedly aid those who hate us and we may well hurt true friends. . . . But down this uneasy path lies an end to bin Ladenism and the specter of an American city attacked with weapons of mass destruction." Written before the stunningly successful Iraqi elections, this book is an important pointer toward the future of Iraq, and of the Middle East in general.

■ Those of us who grew up reading NATIONAL REVIEW in the darkest days of the Cold War remember with fondness how consoling it was to be reassured, every two weeks, that there were some folks out there who understood the true dimensions of the conflict, and how important it was that the good guys win—not just deal, or trade, or coexist, but win. In this regard, NR's history is bound up with the biography of its most famous subscriber: the late Ronald Reagan, whose summons to moral clarity ended up toppling an Evil Empire. ***Tear Down This Wall: The Reagan Revolution—A National Review History*** (Continuum, 197 pp., $12.95) is an anti-Communist nostalgist's dream, a moving anthology of

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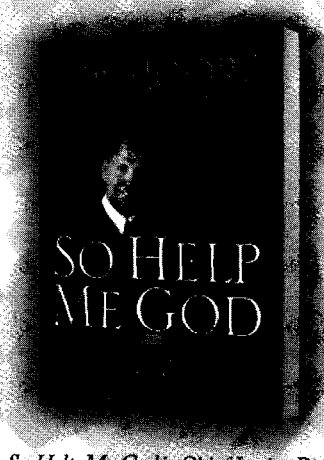

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some of the best NR pieces about Reagan (and some by him), as well as his most important speeches. To read this book—which contains an amazing amount of material in its brief length—is not just to revel in a past that ended well, but to be strengthened for the struggles America will face in days to come.

■ It is now widely feared that the campus as a free-speech haven is a thing of the past: Between the day-to-day impositions of stifling political correctness and the draconian "speech codes" that afflict students at some universities, the ivied halls seem to be less robust arenas of debate than is society as a whole. But Donald Alexander Downs, in his important new book ***Restoring Free Speech and Liberty on Campus*** (Independent Institute/Cambridge, 295 pp., $28.99), says there's cause for hope. Downs, a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison—and a research fellow at the Independent Institute—documents the difference campus activism itself can make in the struggle for free speech. At the University of Pennsylvania, intellectual historian Alan Charles Kors helped spark a successful movement to scrap the institution's speech code; Downs himself was a key player in a similar effort at Madison. "Freedom is not manna from heaven," he writes. "Someone or some group must be willing to stand up and protect it when it comes under fire. . . . Individuals matter." **NR**

■ ART ■

Rubens Resplendent

ROGER KIMBALL

THE most enchanting exhibition in New York at the moment is the show of drawings by the Baroque Flemish master Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (through April 3). This gathering of 115 works on paper touches every phase of Rubens's career. Including apprentice drawings and anatomical studies, finished landscapes, compositional studies, and affectionate family portraits, it is one of those exhibitions that have something for everyone. Connoisseurs will nod over the several drawings that surfaced only in the late 1990s as well as such seldom-seen items as the more than 30 drawings on loan from that nonpareil repository of old-master drawings, the Albertina in Vienna. The general art-going public will savor the entire exhibition, for Rubens was an artist whose visual exuberance was infectious. You can barely glance at his work without being struck by its energy, its confidence, its hearty, affirmative embrace.

Mr. Kimball is managing editor of *The New Criterion*, and author most recently of *The Rape of the Masters: How Political Correctness Sabotages Art.*

As I have noted elsewhere, Rubens was born to exemplify William Blake's epigram that "energy is eternal delight." The man was a prodigy of energy. He was also a great catalyst for energy in others: one of those men whose example sparked and nurtured emulation.

Rubens's father, a Calvinist, fled with his family from Antwerp to Cologne in 1568 to escape religious persecution. Jan Rubens was heterodox in more than his theological opinions. In Cologne, he became a legal adviser to Anna of Saxony, the estranged wife of William the Silent. When Anna was discovered to be pregnant, Jan was imprisoned. He might have been executed. But Maria, his stalwart and forgiving wife, waged a successful (and expensive) campaign to win his release.

The family moved to Siegen, Westphalia, where Peter Paul was born in 1577, the sixth of seven children. When Jan died, in 1587, the family returned to Antwerp and to Roman Catholicism. Educated by the Jesuits, Rubens was as worldly as he was devout—or perhaps I should say he was as devout as he was worldly, for this talented and purposeful artist became a devoted servant in the cause of the Counter-Reformation. (Interesting tidbit: In 1599, half of Europe was Protestant; by 1650, only 20 percent was.)

Rubens early on distinguished himself as an excellent linguist—he became fluent in five languages—and as a student of classical literature. By the age of 21, he had also become a master painter. In later years, he became an avid collector, amassing an impressive collection that included several works by Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese. When he died, in 1640, he was justly commemorated as "the most learned painter in the world."

In 1600, Rubens went to Italy, where for eight years he was court painter to the Duke of Mantua, a position that did not prevent frequent trips to Rome, Genoa, and other important Italian cities. In 1603, the Duke sent him on a goodwill mission to Spain. Rubens's talent as a diplomat was already almost as highly prized as his artistic skill. A master of ingratiation, he often expended more time negotiating international treaties than painting. He was as at home among kings and princes and ambassadors as he was among artists. In 1630, Charles I of England knighted

MOVIE THEORY

Both Rhett and Schindler were war profiteers,
And each held a girl in red most dear,
Though each in his way very differently,
And each self assured in his own formality,
Without a hair out of place, in the chaos,
So seriously that the watchers may recall,
Best with a prayer, and kindly,
That three dimensions may rise by two
And salvation may be anticipated,
Until recognized, as casually as
A hand of cards, but received more quickly,
Unadorned, and with an edge.

—WILLIAM W. RUNYEON

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Rubens for the role he played in brokering a peace treaty between England and Spain. Artist, scholar, diplomat, art collector: Rubens excelled at whatever he touched. "Possibly more than any other artist," wrote the Rubens scholar Christopher White, "he could claim to be the *uomo universale* of his epoch."

In October 1608, Rubens got word that his mother was gravely ill. He returned to Antwerp only to find that she had died some weeks before. He decided to resettle himself in Antwerp and before long had married Isabella Brandt, a niece of his brother Philip's wife, and soon established himself as the first painter of the city.

Rubens and Isabella had three children and by all accounts were extremely happy. When Isabella died in 1626, probably from the plague, Rubens grieved but did not repine. Whatever solace his adherence to the principles of Christian Stoicism failed to provide, his healthy pragmatism made good. In 1630, at the age of 53, he married the 16-year-old Helena Fourment, by whom he had several children and whose engaging blond sensuousness Rubens often celebrated on canvas. This exhibition includes a luscious study for one of Rubens's portraits of Helena, as well as a finely observed drawing of Isabella done in about 1621 from the British Museum. Only in 1964 was it discovered that the verso of this sheet depicts a full length drawing of Rubens, Helena, and one of their children.

Within a few years of returning to Antwerp, Rubens was being hailed as "the Apelles of our age," comparison with the fourth-century B.C. Greek painter being regarded as the zenith of praise. Among other things, this exhibition demonstrates Rubens's ability to achieve the maximum effect with a minimum of means. Consider the beautifully observed drawing of Nicolaas, Rubens's younger son by his first marriage: The tousled-haired boy is animated with a quick scramble of black chalk, the lineaments of his personality deftly set forth in the masterly rendition of nose and lips.

On top of everything else, Rubens was an exceptionally able administrator and entrepreneur. Over the course of three decades, his workshop (among whose "graduates" was Anthony van Dyck) turned out an astonishing 2,000 works, furnishing churches and palaces across Europe with scores of paintings, frescoes, altarpieces, and tapestries.

ALBERTINA, VIENNA

Nicolaas Rubens Wearing a Coral Necklace, *ca. 1619*

Nevertheless, Rubens's enormous reputation has long been shadowed by reservations. On one hand, he is one of the most commanding and exuberant painters on record. Delacroix, himself no slouch in this department, wrote often and admiringly in his *Journal* of Rubens's dash and energy—"that indefinable thing which belongs to him alone." On the other hand, the price of that exuberance was sometimes lack of refinement. Henry James registered this scruple when he noted that Rubens "belongs, certainly, to the small group of the world's greatest painters, but he is, in a certain way, the vulgarest of the group."

James at least responded to Rubens's power. Not everyone has. Thomas Eakins, for example, famously wrote in a letter to his father that "Rubens is the nastiest most vulgar noisy painter that ever lived. . . . His pictures always put me in mind of chamber pots." If Eakins's response is extreme, it is consonant with a common understanding of the adjective that Rubens has bequeathed to the English language. For many, "Rubenesque" connotes pink and adipose flesh, brazenly naked, generally female, the dispensation of mythological or Biblical subject matter only partly compensating for the gross blowsiness set down on canvas. Rubens is always adduced when someone wishes to give us a lecture on how fashions in female beauty change. Today we admire slimness, but (it is said) the plump damsels populating Rubens's pictures demonstrate that fleshiness and lots of it was once upon a time the thing.

Perhaps so. But notwithstanding the caloric ecstasy of some of Rubens's personages, we shouldn't discount the extraordinary elegance of some of his painting. H. W. Janson in his *History of Art* noted that Rubens had "finished what Dürer had started a hundred years earlier—the breakdown of the artistic barriers between North and South." What he meant was that Rubens managed to marry the sumptuous color of Titian and Veronese with the more astringent geometries and drier palette of the Netherlandish tradition. Rubens, as one commentator observed, "carried the image of Titian in his mind as a lady carries that of her beloved in her heart."

It is one of the ironies of artistic fashion that this glimpse into the engine room of Rubens's art is a contemporary, or at least a modern, imposition. As the curators of this exhibition note, Rubens, like most artists of his time, regarded his drawings partly as private mementos, partly as trade secrets. He would "never have allowed his drawings to be shown in an exhibition like the present one. . . . To display his drawings publicly, so that everybody could see his searching, his sweat and toil, would probably have felt entirely inappropriate." Many of the drawings in this exhibition show Rubens hesitating, testing, even practicing; others are gemlike distillations of visual intelligence. But confronted by a giant like Rubens, it would seem indecorous to allow decorousness to keep us from these rough drafts of genius. **NR**

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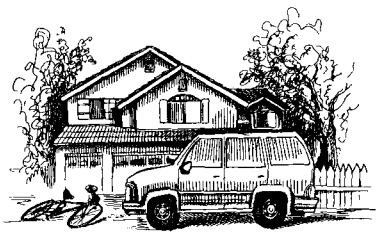
■ THE STRAGGLER ■

Vox Humana



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

"With that voice," the lady gushed, "you can always get what you want!"

If only it were true! The mise-en-scène, I hasten to say, was far from intimate. There were half a dozen of us sitting round a restaurant table in Washington, D.C., and the ladies, who were a clear majority, were all of the most respectable sort. In any case, I hear this a lot. It seems counterintuitive to me, given this nation's origins, but native—sorry, one is nowadays driven to pleonasm here: I mean *native-born*—Americans just love a British accent. And yes, the temptation to swing matters in one's favor a bit by laying on that accent is occasionally irresistible. Contra my lady dining companion, I can't always get what I want, and there are of course some places—certain bars in Boston or New York—where the effect might be dramatically the opposite of what is intended; but it is a fact that having a British voice gives one an edge in most of the USA.

It took me longer than usual to get wise to this because I have always thought my own voice very unsatisfactory. I was raised in a rustic English county where nothing much had happened for a millennium or so. The nearby prominence that official maps showed as Hunsbury Hill was known to us as Danes' Camp, a name it must have acquired in King Alfred's time; and people still argued about which route Thomas à Becket had taken when fleeing the county seat in 1164. The local people, who did not venture from home any more than necessary, had developed their own dialects. There were at least two in the county proper—three if you included the Soke of Peterborough, which we generally didn't, and where the plural of "house" is "housen." The playmates of my childhood dropped their initial aitches and the terminal "g" from "-ing," formed the regular perfect tense with "be" instead of "have," pronounced the "oh" and "eye" diphthongs as "oo" and "oy" respectively, spoke of the world about them with a variety of dialect words like "jitty" (an alley) and "mardy" (ill-tempered), addressed friendly strangers as "Duck," and used metonymy to refer to London, 60 miles away: "the Smoke."

None of this sat well with my parents, who both came from further west and north, and had washed up in the county as part of that great shuffling the English population underwent during WWII. My mother in particular thought dialect speech uncouth, and corrected us ceaselessly when we were in her presence. Cowed by this relentless pressure at home, yet unwilling to be scoffed at by my coevals for putting on airs, I reached my teens in a state of bilingual confusion. Then my secondary school, which demanded high standards in all things, laid my vowels and consonants on the anvil, so that I emerged into the adult world speaking a nondescript non-dialect: Oikish, the flat, characterless, locality-less diction of working-class lads and lasses trained up to be acceptable in polite society. "You can take the boy out of the Bronx, but not the Bronx out of the boy," New Yorkers say. The English know better.

Alas, the adult world I had been trained into was disappearing just as I arrived. By the time I graduated from university, not only was it no longer the case that local dialects were looked down upon; they were positively celebrated. The old style of news announcers on British radio and television, whose perfectly standard speech might have been learned from scratch out of Professor Daniel Jones's great 1918 classic *Outline of English Phonetics*, had been put out to pasture in the BBC World Service. Their replacements on the home front flaunted the abrupt vowels of the north, the buzzing fricatives of the southwest, Cockney glottal stops, Ulster snarls, and the soporific cadences of Wales. These were their blazons of individuality, of *authenticity*. I had no such. My escutcheon was blank. I could have got a job with the World Service, I suppose, but I came to America instead.

It is a fact well known to phoneticists, but of which the larger public is quite unaware, that the United States is a nation of astounding uniformity in speech. England has, or until recently had, villages 20 miles apart whose speech differs more than that of any two places in the entire breadth of the USA. This takes some getting used to. Professor C. K. Thomas (*The Phonetics of American English*) identifies ten speech areas in this nation. After 20 years' residence I can distinguish only four: Southern, Yankee, Noo Yawk, and Other. The ears of native—darn it, *native-born*—Americans are finer-tuned.

One consequence is that American humor is often lost on me. Some New York friends, after a lady from Pennsylvania had left the room, let forth long-suppressed giggles at the way she had said: "My husband and I enjoy *bowling*." I could not see the point, and had to have it explained. In my researches into the late President Coolidge, I several times encountered references to his hilarious Vermont accent: He could get four syllables out of the word "cow," etc., etc. When I finally tracked down some recordings of the man speaking, he sounded to me merely Other, with a touch of Yankee. (His son John, with whom I had the pleasure of conversing, was perfectly Other.)

There is, in fact, a doctoral thesis to be written—perhaps it already has been—on the phonetics of presidential politics. I nurse a private suspicion that nobody with a squeaky voice can rise to very high office in a democracy. Newt Gingrich attained House Speakership, it is true, but he could never be president. You just can't be taken altogether seriously if your voice squeaks. It's unfair, but there you are. Gore Vidal, who grew up among Washington gossip, claims that Theodore Roosevelt had a squeaky voice, but surviving recordings do not, it seems to me, bear this out. Our current president is, like myself, a baritone. Lincoln's normal voice was in the tenor range, as is Bill Clinton's—one reason the latter can get such striking effects by descending into huskiness.

Perhaps, along with the nips and tucks and injections that are, I am told, now routine among candidates for the highest office, there might be included some minor surgery on the vocal cords. In the matter of getting what you want, having the right voice is rarely decisive, but it can shorten the odds. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Oil-for-U.N.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 4

A WILD thought passes through my mind, which is that maybe Benon Sevan is in fact innocent! Innocent of receiving money directly from his buddy Fakhry Abdelnour, the Egyptian whose company wanted Iraqi chits to permit oil purchases. Sevan was certainly not innocent of using his influence in behalf of his friends and of failing to blow any whistles when suspect contractors were designated to oversee the oil-for-food program, a cover-up for easing the life and enhancing the fortunes of Saddam Hussein. The U.N. had evolved into a bureaucracy besotted by people who were contriving to get around the freeze on the full production and sale of Iraqi oil.

There is one concrete item that Paul Volcker's commission of inquiry brought out. During the period being examined, Benon Sevan received gifts totaling $160,000 from—not Saddam, not Abdelnour, not Amir Muhammed Rashid, the former Iraqi oil minister. But from an aunt. An aunt greatly devoted to Sevan, we plausibly assume, though she is dead and can't be questioned. Now, many transactions can amount to $160,000. But the Volcker commission focuses on a figure of—$160,000; paid by Abdelnour to Saddam as an illegal surcharge for oil purchased.

It's odd, but there is no evidence that the aunt gave another $160,000 to Abdelnour. And anyway, those would have been discrete benefactions. Sevan says he is entirely innocent. U.N. officials who worked with him for years before his retirement express worry and annoyance that Sevan should have got himself so embedded in the sticky oil-for-food situation, but it isn't likely that he will be yanked from his retirement in Cyprus, deprived of his diplomatic immunity, and charged with grand larceny.

No, the debacle of oil-for-food demonstrates the difficulty in managing a sum like the extraordinary $64 billion involved. That is the value of the oil that Iraq was permitted to sell in order to raise money to feed hungry Iraqis and to look after medical needs. The component parts of the operation, which took place under U.N. supervision, begged for exploitation. There were a myriad of people anxious to get the coupons for that oil, because it was being merchandised at a price lower than the price of oil in the world market. A reporter for the *New York Times* summarizes the handling of the matter. "Iraq did not sell oil to just anyone. Under the guidance of Taha Yassin Ramadan, an Iraqi vice president, and the Revolutionary Command Council, headed by Mr. Hussein, a large portion of the oil allocations were handed out to a select group that included businessmen, politicians, journalists, and diplomats who were perceived to be sympathetic to Iraq." The friendly people negotiated the sale of $64 billion in oil. It beggars the imagination that anything on such a scale, going through so many hands, could have got safe passage from Iraqi oil wells to bread for kids.

Volcker's commission has put off for months the completion of its investigation. What we can say at this point is that, quoting the news item, the U.N.'s "largest relief effort was riddled with political favoritism and mismanagement."

"I am reluctant to conclude that the U.N. is damaged beyond repair," commented Rep. Henry Hyde, chairman of the House International Relations Committee. "But these revelations certainly point in this direction." Sen. Norm Coleman of the Senate Permanent Committee on Investigations wants action taken against Mr. Sevan, just to begin with.

But whatever steps are taken, they aren't going to tell us very much that we don't already take for granted, namely the attractions of larceny. If what happens is the demystification of the U.N. as a vessel of incorruptibility, then that belated introduction to reality is welcome. It doesn't tell us what exactly a renewed relationship with the U.N. should stress. It doesn't even tell us what has happened to all that money Saddam accumulated, some of it with the connivance of U.N. officials.

Royal Pastimes

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 11

THE talk of the wedding planned by the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles seems mostly genial. For a while, royal communicants thought it would not come off; but they were wrong, it seems. After April 8, when the wedding takes place (it would be provincial to say, after the wedding is "consummated"), the Prince of Wales will get on with his duties, married to Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Cornwall.

But when he ascends the throne, he will be Defender of the Faith like his mother, the present queen. And indeed like every other monarch dating back to 1521, when the title was conferred by Pope Leo X on Henry VIII, in appreciation of the king's rejection of Martin Luther's schism. Little did the pope know what the Defender of the Faith would go on to do, but the honorific stayed on through the Protestantization of Britain.

There are temporal responsibilities, held formally by the crown. Prince Charles, like his mother, will be head of the Church of England. His prospective ascendancy has been troubling, because of the marital situation.

In brief, Charles was captivated, in 1970, by Camilla. But three years later she married Major Andrew Parker Bowles. They had children, but to make it clear that the close friendship survived, the son of that union was christened with Prince Charles serving as godfather. Parker Bowles even accepted the title (if you can bear it), of Silver Stick in Waiting to the Prince. Anybody who will do that for the prince will do anything, and indeed Parker Bowles was quickly cuckolded, without apparent objection, though he and Camilla eventually got divorced.

Meanwhile, Charles had married Diana, who was soon complaining about her husband's double life. But she died in 1997, so that the decks were partly cleared. But Major Parker Bowles didn't die, so that Camilla is a divorced woman

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with a living husband, and the rules here had been for a very long time rather firm. Kings could sleep around, but not marry divorcées, as Edward VIII discovered, forfeiting his crown.

There lingers the problem of the auspices of the forthcoming marriage. Well, it will be a civil ceremony. Queen Elizabeth is not about to exercise her power to repeal the prohibition against marriage to a divorcée. But the surrounding benignity of the whole scene incorporates the Archbishop of Canterbury. He has to deny his premises to the couple, but he will have a special Christian service of "prayer and dedication" at St. George's Chapel in Windsor. The two princelings have joined the wellwishers, issuing a joint statement. "We are both very happy for our father and Camilla and we wish them all the luck in the future." That's the kind of sendoff one might have expected if Charles and Camilla had had an entry in the British Derby.

But "luck" replaces other forms of equipoise, when princes take mistresses, mistresses shed families, queens dither in the matter of royal respectability, titles are contrived—Princess of Wales no, Duchess of Cornwall, okay—and life goes on.

Is it jerky to ask what article of faith is the Crown in the business of defending? If the solemnity of marriage isn't an article of faith, what is?

The evanescence of practicing Christianity in Europe is in contrast to the huge enrollments in the faith in the Third World. If present trends continue, Philip Jenkins calculates in his book, *The Next Christendom*, by 2025 there will be 633 million Christians in Africa, 640 million in South America, and 460 million in Asia. Whether faith in the Third World will flower in orthodoxy isn't predictable, though we had a flavor of doctrinal contention in 1998 when, at the Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops, the Third World bishops refused to condone homosexual ordinations. That defiance was met by Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong of Newark, who explained that African Christianity had "moved out of animism into a very superstitious kind of Christianity," warning against "irrational Pentecostal hysteria." Yes, but how to explain the hysterical doctrines of Moses and Abraham and Christ?

Pyongyang Knocking

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 15

THE North Korean nuclear bomb issue is as exasperating as any post-Soviet dilemma the U.S. has ever faced. We don't know whether Dear Leader Kim Jong Il actually has the bombs alleged, but there is no alternative to assuming that he does, and we know that he has missiles nimble enough to fly right over Japan. Great-circle-wise, Alaska is cheek by jowl with that part of the world.

There is, then, no strategy at hand that doesn't presuppose that a part of the U.S. could be attacked by North Korean bombs. But it is also clear that measured alongside the vulnerability of other targets, we are remote. From which it follows that North Korea's neighbors are in closer range and have more to fear.

For obvious reasons, the nations involved simply assume that the U.S. is going to dictate policy, though China is critical. It is a responsibility of President Bush to address the nations on the borders and persuade them that it is they who have to devise policies to cope with Kim Jong Il.

China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan are immediately affected by the rise of Pyongyang to nuclear status. It is they that need to set policy, and petition the world for relevant aid in implementing it.

The U.S. nuclear arsenal is available for punitive action, in the event Pyongyang were to launch a missile. But that is different from serving a deterrent purpose. If Dear Leader shoots off a missile, deterrence has ipso facto failed. An ensuing rainstorm of nuclear bombs made in the U.S.A. would bring devastation, but that is different from preemption, which is what the world hopes for.

We know now, from Libyan revelations, that uranium hexafluoride, which is the progenitor of the nuclear bomb, was sold by North Korea to Libya. We don't know whom else the stuff was sold to, but do know that there are other aspirant nuclear-bomb producers, including Syria, Iran, and even Egypt. It is alarming to reflect that the sale of the uranium has to mean that it was surplus to North Korea's own needs, suggesting that its inventory might be larger than we have feared.

There isn't any obvious way that a confederation of nations could simply estop traffic from North Korea to other parts of the world, and the politics of any attempt at such a quarantine would be difficult to devise. Yet the neighboring powers need to come up with something, and the nearest anyone has come is Japan's pending requirement that any ship entering its harbors be insured against oil spills, a measure pretty explicitly directed against North Korean shipping, which is uninsured. China, of course, could impose definitive sanctions, stopping food shipments and oil, and opening its borders to North Korean emigration.

What the country's leaders will need to gauge is the reaction of Kim to economic pressure. All that has been asked of him, so far, is that he abandon his nuclear development, pursuant to a formal commitment made by North Korea to the IAEA. But the great question is whether incremental pressure will lead Pyongyang a) to the abandonment of the nuclear program, or b) to the use of its weaponry, never mind the retaliatory devastation brought on.

Kim's southern border is a mere 40 miles from Seoul, a geophysical reality which has encouraged South Korea to a supplicant's role in policies aimed at the North. So—that is a problem. But it is more immediately a problem for South Korea, and then for Japan and China and Russia, than for the United States.

We are advised that the personal hostility felt by Bush and Kim for each other argues for a diminished role by the U.S. in prospective policies aimed at Kim. The lesson to take from this, we are advised, is for Mr. Bush not to append his name to any official derogation of Dear Leader. That is a considerable sacrifice for the president, but one he'll simply have to make—while turning to the Pacific powers and informing them that it is up to them to take the next step.

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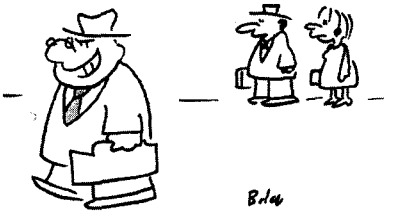

"I'm not saying he engages in unethical business practices, but he says, 'Aarrr, matey!' all the time."

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Daffier 'n' Daffier . . .

One of the problems with the concept of "spin" is that it turns media analysis into a full-fledged James Jesus Angleton Cold War wilderness of mirrors. At Berlin station in the good old days, if the guy's telling the truth, that could mean he's a real defector. If what he's saying isn't true, that could mean he's a KGB-planted fake defector. On the other hand, if the guy's telling the truth, that could mean he's a fake defector feeding some true stuff so we won't spot he's a fake defector. And, if what he's saying isn't true, that could mean he's a real defector, since every transparently honest fellow is bound to get a few things wrong. On the other other hand, if what he's saying isn't true, that could mean he's a fake defector posing as one of those true defectors who appear more plausible by getting a few things wrong. On the other other other hand . . .

An ex-MI6 guy in Britain once told me that in intelligence every fact had a minimum of seven possible meanings. As I recall, at Angleton's CIA, they figured it had eleven possible meanings. Let's just say it's like 7-Eleven: Whatever you're looking for, it'll be in there somewhere.

I don't think the Berlin-station types would have been impressed by our current journalistic elite. For example, the other day, some secret tape recordings of George W. Bush fell into the hands of the *New York Times* and the excitable lads rushed into print with them, and the great herd of America's mainstream media stampeded along behind. The chaps at the *Times* were thrilled by these illicit tapes and splashed them over the front page for days on end, even though the clandestine recordings shockingly reveal that the private off-the-record Bush is . . . exactly the same as the public on-the-record Bush!

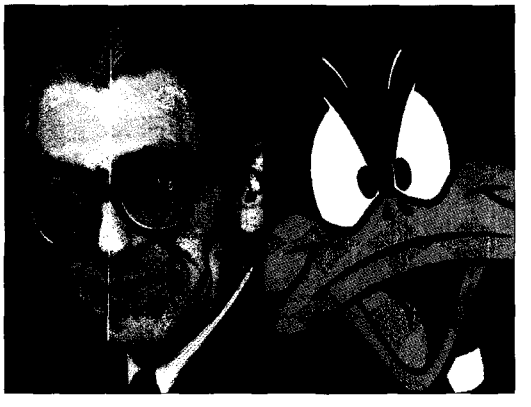
But, like some neophyte slip of a thing in his first week at the CIA, the *Times* assumed that the very fact that they were secret recordings must mean they were highly damaging. In completely private conversations taped without his knowledge, Bush reveals . . .

"I've got a great wife"!!

"The Bible is pretty good about keeping your ego in check"!!!

"I'm not going to kick gays, because I'm a sinner. How can I differentiate sin?"!!!!

These and other shocking revelations caused me to fall into a deep sleep, slip off the chair, and get a nasty paper cut as page 27 of the *Times*'s top-secret scoop nicked my cheek on the way down. I'm not a conspiracy-minded guy, but when I got to this paragraph I did wonder whether the whole thing wasn't a massive leg-pull and whether Bush had to do 27 takes to get through a particular line without cracking up:



James Jesus Angelton *Daffy Duck*

"Told that one conservative supporter was saying Mr. Bush had pledged not to hire gay people, Mr. Bush said sharply: 'No, what I said was, I wouldn't *fire* gays.'"

To paraphrase Daffy Duck, consonant trouble.

The first time I heard George W. Bush speak was at the Elks Lodge in Littleton, N.H., in 1999, and this is how he answered an interminable question from a very aggressive gay activist who'd traveled over from Vermont: "Hey, we're all sinners, buddy."

The media expend an enormous amount of energy proving that George W. Bush is—unbeknownst to the world—living a double-life exactly like the one he lives in public. In the thin gruel of Kitty Kelley's attempt to do to the Bushes what she did to Sinatra and Liz Taylor, my favorite shock revelation was this: A couple of years back, President Bush agreed to host the 35th reunion of his Yale graduating class. One of them, Miss Petra Leilani Akwai, had been a Mister back when the president knew her, and there was much speculation on the potential awkwardness of the encounter. Here's how it went:

"You might remember me as Peter when we left Yale," said Petra.

"And now you've come back as yourself," said the president.

That's classic Bush: straightforward, transparent, very human, and kind of goofily sweet. Yet Kitty Kelley seemed to think it was damaging stuff.

The tragedy of Dan Rather and his fake documents is that, even if they had been true, it would have made no difference. Even the alleged revelation in the *Times* scoop that Bush had tried marijuana fits the narrative—a wastrel youth who redeemed himself.

By contrast, the narrative to which the Left is wedded—that Bush is simultaneously the world's biggest moron and an evil genius—is one even Angleton's CIA could never have straightened out. In the same week the *Times* was publishing its "Bush Is a Christian Who Loves His Wife Shock! See pages 2, 3, 4-9, 12-23, and special unreadable Pulitzer-nomination section you can pull out and toss straight into the trash," Congressman Maurice Hinchey, Democrat of New York, was telling a Social Security forum in Ithaca that the fake Rathergate documents had been planted by Karl Rove. Though everyone else on the planet knew they were fake within 23 seconds, Karl cunningly identified the one news team dumb enough to fall for them.

Hmm. You don't have to be an old Cold War hand to figure that Congressman Hinchey is an obvious Rove deep-sleeper planted in New York decades ago to make the Democrats look even bigger dopes than CBS . . . **NR**

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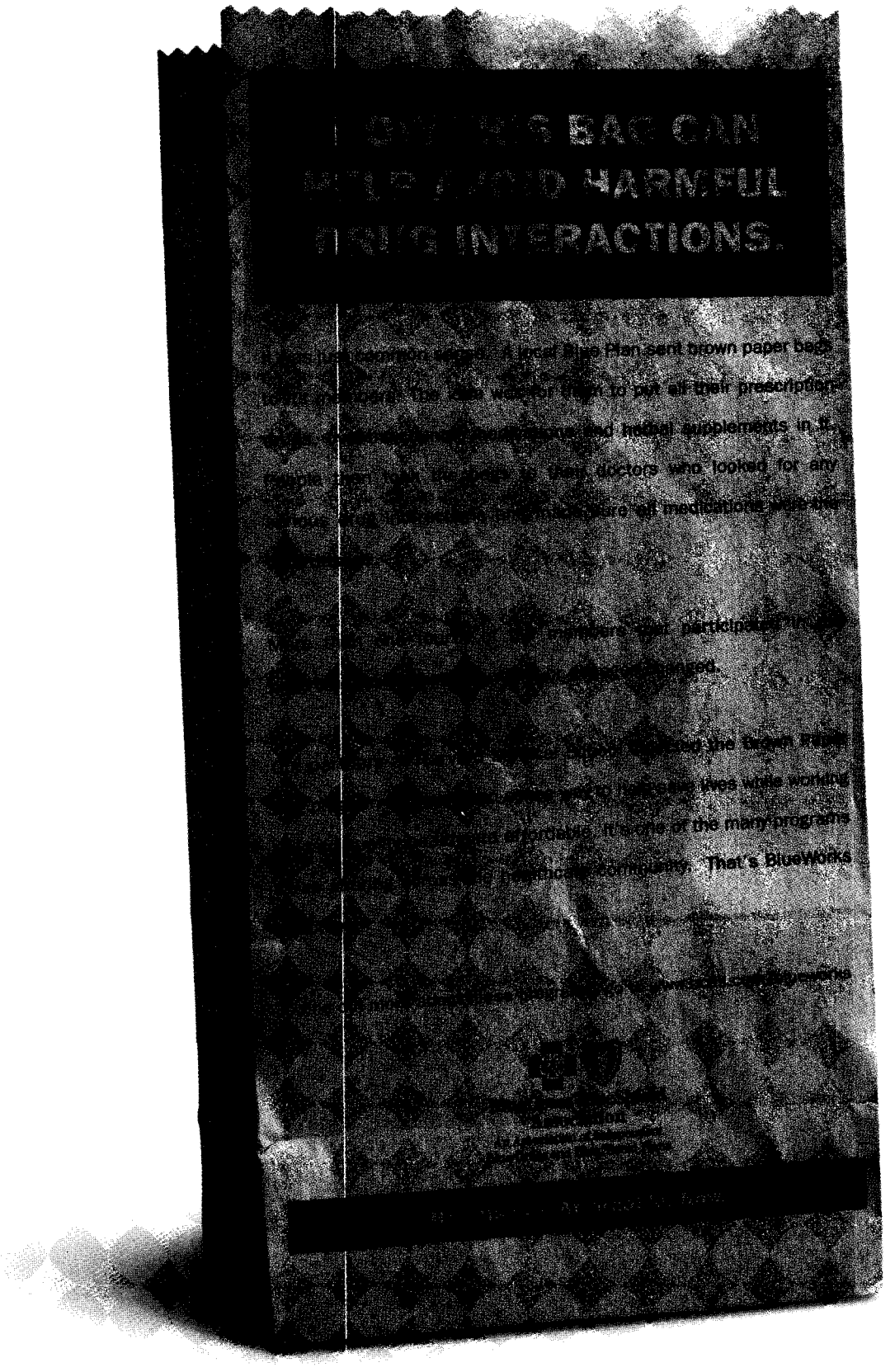

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